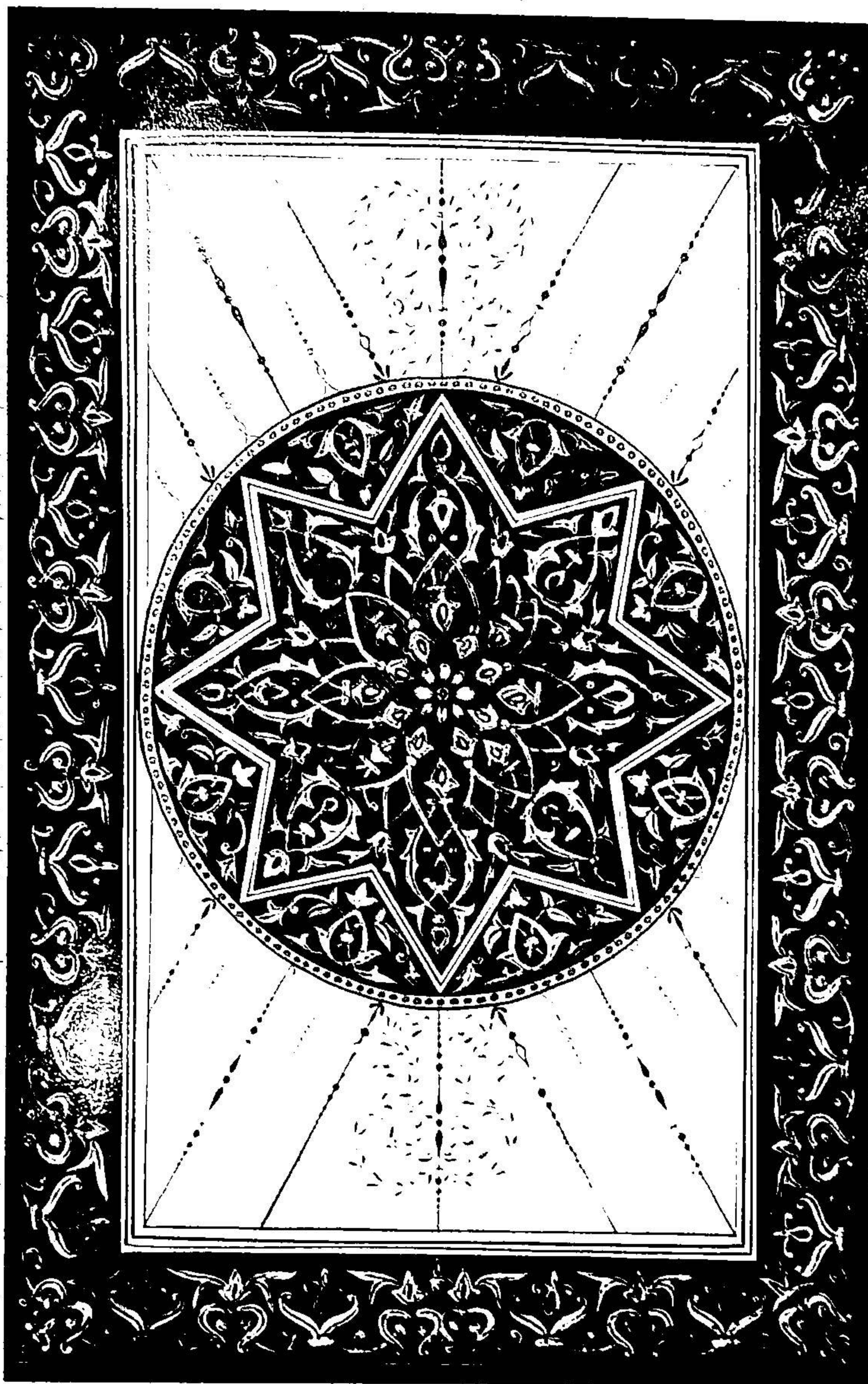
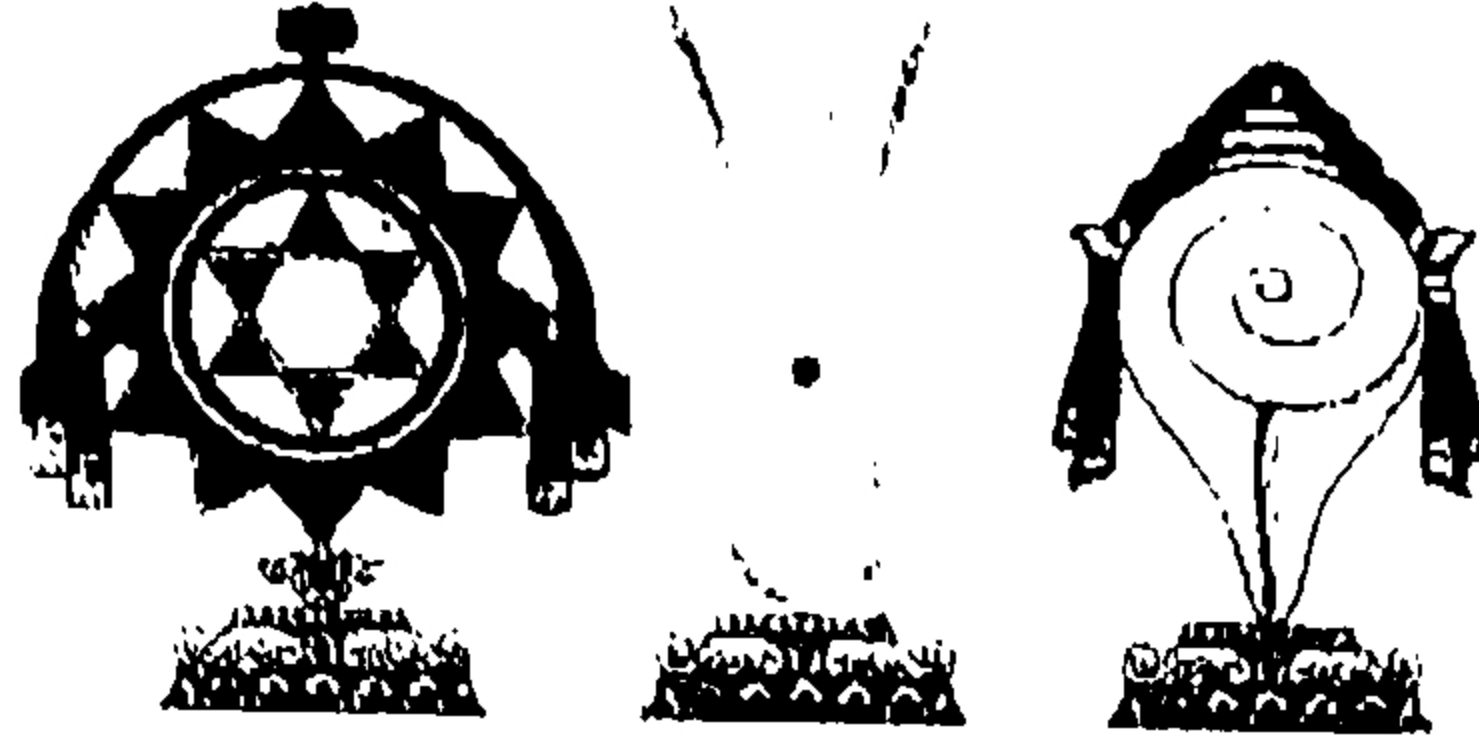


BRAHMAVĀDIN ṚSIS AND BRAHMAVIDYĀ SWAMI SANTADAS



English Translation
DEBIPRASAD BHATTACHARYA



Brahmavādin Ṛṣis and Brahmavidyā

Swami Santadas

English Translation
Debiprasad Bhattacharya

Kathia Baba Ashram, Sukchar

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FORWARD

Brahmavadi Rishi O Brahma Vidya was the name of the book written by Tara Kishore RoyChoudhury Sharma who later became our respected and beloved Sri Swami Santa-Dasji Kathia Babaji Maharaj. In this book Santa Das Ji successfully managed to accomplish the monumental task of organizing a synopsis that reflects the true essence of Indian tradition, Indian culture, and Indian philosophy.

We sincerely thank Late Debi Prasad Bhattacharya, who through his hard work and dedication completed the task of translating this book in to English language, enabling it to reach a broader audience. Our sincere thanks to his son Sri Rathin Bhattacharya for providing us with the opportunity to publish this work and to his daughter Urbi Bhattacharya for her unconditional dedication to her father in helping him finish this great work.

This book provides a comprehensive and accurate insight in to Indian philosophy that has shaped cultural diasporas in India through ages. We hope that Santa Dasji's blessing will be showered on all those who would try and connect with his philosophy by reading this book. This book is a literary treasure and Kathia Baba Ashram Publication House is proud to add this book among other valuable collections.

Mr. Pinaki Datta worked really hard to get this book published. I pray to God that he showers Pinaki with his blessings.

Dr. Brindaban Bihari Das (Mahanta)

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Though this book is originally the work of Sri Sri Santadasji Maharaj, the translator's role is undeniable in bringing it to a mass viewership, as in the virgin form, it was written in Bengali, which covers only a small sector of the country's population. This work of translation was most tedious, as unlike translations of literary pieces, this had Sanskrit words and the essence of Sanskrit and above all - the spirit of ageless India - throughout the whole text. Thus to express it in a foreign language (though the language be as natural to one as one's own mother-tongue) is quite a demanding task. Such a task requires the profound knowledge of three things - the original language, the language in which to be translated and the scriptures. Also one has to have a very thorough conception as to the style and intention of the author in writing every word, as Sri Sri Santadasji believed very strongly that each word has its own significance and exaggeration or wastage of words belittles the meaning of the original text, and leads to fallacy. He would quote: *shabda brahma* (Each word represents the One).

Such a venture undoubtedly displays extreme courage on the part of the translator - Debiprasad Bhattacharya. More so as he had never even met Sri Sri Santadasji in his mortal form. Thus a little introduction about Debiprasad and how he came to pursue such an attempt will not be out of context with the contents of this book.

Tarapada, a brilliant scholar, came to Calcutta sometime during the first quarter of the last century to pursue higher studies. He was among the best students of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray (the legendary Chemist, educationist and a great son of Bengal) at the Presidency College. Being steadfast in his studies, he endured severe hardships and ultimately stood first both in B.Sc. and M.Sc. (in Chemistry). Tarapada secured a good job in Calcutta, got married to Kamala Devi and started living in a rented accommodation in Baghbazar (a well-known part of North Calcutta made famous by great souls like Balaram Basu, Sister Nivedita, Girish Chandra Ghosh). Tarapada & Kamala had five children. Debiprasad was the eldest among them.

As if pre-ordained by the divine Providence, Debiprasad came in contact with Sri Shishir Kumar Brahmachari or Sisirda (as he was popularly known to devotees of Sri Sri Santadasji Maharaj) - who lived in the same house in Baghbazar as a tenant. This turned out to be a blessed acquaintance for Debiprasad since, Shishir-da - other than being a disciple - was almost like a personal secretary to Sri Sri Santadasji.

Debiprasad was only five when Sri Sri Santadasji left his mortal abode (1935) and hence,

never got an opportunity to meet or listen to this great saint of modern India. He, however, used to listen with rapt attention when Shishirda spoke about his Gurudeva - it was like nectar to him. Shishirda encouraged him to read all the works of Sri Sri Santadasji - and so he did - even at a tender age and actually 'understood' it. To him, Sri Sri Santadasji's words appeared charming and blessed. The Philosophy of Nimbarka and the basic tenets of sanatana Hindu Dharma was revealed to him through this study.

His 'understanding' of the life and works of Santadasji Maharaj was so profound that Sri Sri Dhananjay Das Kathia Babaji Maharaj (the spiritual successor to Sri Sri Santadasji) once said 'Debiprasad has truly understood my Baba (Sri Sri Santadasji Maharaj)'.

It was only but natural that it took close to twenty years for Debiprasad to finally lay his head down at the feet of Sri Sri Dhananjaydasji Maharaj - accepting him as his Guru. Sri Sri Dhananjaydasji Maharaj being aware of this dilemma of Debiprasad - ~~always~~ appreciated Debiprasad's unflinching devotion towards his beloved Gurudeva. Even during the Diksha (divine initiation) ceremony, Sri Sri Dhananjay Dasji Maharaj reassured him saying *amar baba-i tomar Guru* (It is my revered Gurudev who is giving you initiation - not me.)

One who had known Debiprasad (who was just an M.A. in English Literature!) would acknowledge that he was a gifted intellectual - an intellect which can only be compared with the best minds of Bengal Renaissance. His friends and colleagues at Scottish Church College (where he taught for twelve years as a Lecturer) and later, at Jadavpur University (where he taught in the Department of Comparative Literature) would also acknowledge that.

After his retirement, Debiprasad took up the task of translating the great works of Sri Sri Santadasji Maharaj in English language. Even though challenged by a deteriorating vision and terminal illness of his wife, he never gave up and had been able to translate substantial portion of his great work - before he was finally stopped by cancer at the age of seventy-two.

Brahmavadi Rishis and Brahmavidya was actually translated later - if we go by chronology - but the only thing that justifies its early publication is the fact that this was the first book written by Sri Tarakishore Choudhury - years before he became a sannyasin whom the spiritual World will always remember as Sri Sri Santadas Kathia Bababji Maharaj - the blessed successor to Sri Sri Ramdas Kathia Babaji Maharaj.

Debiprasad Bhattacharya

INTRODUCTION

Brahmavādin Ṛṣis and Brahnavidyā is the first full and comprehensive exposition of ancient Indian Brahnavidyā in Bengali. It is also the best book on the subject so far written in modern times. And the subject – namely Brahnavidyā – is the highest conceivable by Man: the nature of Reality – the ultimate spiritual Reality behind the world of phenomena which the Upaniṣads (Vedānta), which are universally acknowledged in India as the one supreme and final authority on the subject, refer to as Brahman or Ātman. The term Brahnavidyā is first clearly mentioned in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad in the following famous śloka:

tasmai sa vidvān upasannāya samyak,
praśānta-cittāya samanvitāya.

* * * *

provāca taṁ tattvato brahnavidyām.

The author Tarakishore Choudhury, who became famous later on as Swami Santadasji Maharaj of Vrindavan, makes clear at the outset what he means by Brahnavidyā. Brahnavidyā, he tells us, is that branch – if it can be called a “branch” at all, considering its all-encompassing character of knowledge or science which seeks to answer such fundamental and ultimate questions as – “from where has this world around us – idaṁ sarvaṁ – come into existence? What is its ultimate source and origin? Where have all living beings like ourselves come? How and by what or whom are they kept alive? What happens to them after death? What is the true nature of the individual soul or jīva? What on the other hand is the nature of the external (physical) world in which we live and move – the “jagat”? What exactly is the nature of the relation between the jīvas and Brahman? And how, on the other hand, is the world – jagat related to Brahman? What is bondage (bandha) and what is liberation (mokṣa)? What is the difference between a “baddha” (bound) jīva and a “mukta” jīva? How is the baddha jīva liberated – released from bondage? And finally, what are the ways that lead to liberation (mokṣa)?

True, all these questions do not occur as such in the author's definition of of Brahnavidyā; but they have all been dealt with thoroughly and answered; and they have all been answered in a manner that sets the book apart from any other book on the same and similar subject written in modern times. But what is it that constitutes the uniqueness of the book? To answer this question we must turn to the first two words of the title of the book – “Brahmavādin Ṛṣis”, and then, to the amazing Introduction and the most significant “Preface”.

The order of the two words might very well have been the reverse, with Brahnavidyā coming first. That it is not so, that, in other words, it is “Brahmavādin Ṛṣis” coming first - is not accidental or arbitrary; but deliberate and significant. The order of words in the title is important and significant because without the Brahmavādin Ṛṣis, that is the Ṛṣis (seers) who discoursed on Brahman after knowing Him, there would be no Brahnavidyā; the greatest gift of India – ancient India – to the world; it is the Brahmavādin ṛṣis who revealed this supreme knowledge to their disciples and to the whole world. The highest, the oldest and the most authentic source of this supreme revelation is the “Śruti”. The term Śruti means “the Vedas”, generally, but when it comes to Brahnavidyā, it refers primarily to that part or section of the Vedas which deals with knowledge (jñāna) as distinguished from action (karma), especially ritual or sacrificial acts (yajña). These are the great Upaniṣads, also known as Vedānta; as constituting the last part (anta) of the Vedas (this, it may be noted here, is the original sense of the term – “Vedānta”). But the exponents of Brahnavidyā, the Brahmavādins – are not to be found in the Upaniṣads alone – where, it may be noted incidentally, the great teachers are not always ṛṣis like Yajñyavalkya, but also sometimes, kings and gods like Yama in the Kathopaniṣad – but also elsewhere in the Mahābhārata, or the Purāṇas. The latter are broadly referred to as “Smṛti” – a term which also signifies the “Dharma-śāstras” like the Mahābhārata. All these śāstras (scriptural texts) which lie outside vedic literature are generally designated as Smṛti as distinguished from Śruti. According to ancient tradition, the author of the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas, especially the eighteen great Purāṇas (Mahāpurāṇas) is the same ṛṣi - Vedā-vyāsa (Vyāsa) to whom the author of this book pays a glowing tribute – repeatedly and with a sense of gratitude too deep for words. And in all these sacred texts, frequently appear on the scene, in the course of famous narratives and old legends, great ancient ṛṣis as spiritual teachers – “ācāryas” a

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term often used by the author before "ṛṣis". Some among them are vedic ṛṣis like Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, who also appear in the two great epics – the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata as well as the Purāṇas; Sanatkumāra, Yajñavalkya and the sage king (Rājārṣi) Janaka are present in the Upanṣads as well as in the Mahābhārata; some other famous sages and seers – munis and ṛṣis – assume the role of spiritual teachers (ācāryas) in the great Purāṇas; for instance, the great Śukadeva and Kapila muni and the nine great yogins (yogīndra) in Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Parāśara, Maitreya and Bharata in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa; and there are many others who appear in the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas like Markaṇḍeya and Agastya.

I have not, however, mentioned as yet the six "maharṣis" – great ṛṣis – whose names are associated with the famous six systems of Indian Philosophy – "Ṣaḍ-darśana"; they are: Kaṇāda (Vaiśeṣika Darśana) Gotama (Nyāya Darśana), Kapila (Sāṃkhya Darśana), Patañjali (Yoga-sūtra or Pātañjala Darśana), Jaimini (Pūrva-mīmāṃsā Darśana) and Vyāsa or Vādarāyaṇa (Uttara-mīmāṃsā, Brahmasūtra or Vedānta Darśana).

Now, before we come to these six famous maharṣis, we must pause for a while to consider a crucial question and try to understand what must appear to the reader as something of a mystery. The question is a simple one: namely, how the author come to write about this subject: "ṣaḍ-darśana", the six systems of Indian Philosophy. But why, in the first instance, should this question arise at all? And this will need inevitably to the heart of the mystery. What makes the writing of this monumental work an inexplicable puzzle is the fact that which he freely and with rare humility confesses at the outset, that he did not possess the minimum competence demanded by his stupendous venture. He was a keen student of modern Western Philosophy and modern Western Science, but for the task he set himself what he thought was far more important was knowledge of Sanskrit, of which his ignorance, he says, was so appalling that he even lacked even a modicum of Sanskrit grammar. This statement, however, is more expressive of his character – rustic humility than actual fact. The fact is that – though he remained in his student days virtually ignorant of Sanskrit grammar but read a great deal of Sanskrit literature; especially the sacred texts. It is also true that his characteristic

made him somewhat exaggerate his scholastic deficiencies as an exponent of Brahmavidyā. And yet, even after accepting the author's low estimate of his own capacity and competence for his job, this book, along with three volumes of "Darśanika Brahmavidyā" to which it seems as a splendid and monumental Introduction, remains a marvel – a source of unbounded wonder not only for the readers, but also for the author himself. This latter becomes movingly evident from the author's own confession. Nevertheless, he writes in a crucial and profoundly significant passage, "I have been blessed with a most extraordinary good fortune. I have received the grace of the great – in the person of a great Guru. Through the power of that Grace, even the most recondite philosophical texts (of ancient India) have revealed to me, secretly preserved ambrosia of knowledge like loving mother. Discovering this, I myself have from time to time, been struck with surprise."

The feeling of surprise was expressed many years later - when Tarakishore Choudhury had long since become Swami Santadasji Maharaj - on two occasions.

One day, many years after Tarakishore Choudhury became Swami Santadas, one of his oldest and most devoted disciples, late Śrī Śīśir Kumar Brahmācārī – it was he who urged and inspired me to undertake this translation – was reading out to him certain passages, at the latter's behest presumably, "Brahmavādin Ṛṣis and Brahmavidyā". His Gurudeva was listening. When the reading of the relevant passages was done Santadāsji Mahārāj, with a surprised look on his face, remarked, in a tone expressing evident wonder " Strange! I find indeed that every tattva (truth) that has been set forth there wholly correct!"

Another disciple of his, a young Sādhu named Vanamālīdās happened at one time to be haunted by a persistent and disgusting doubt – concerning the validity of the statements made by his Gurudeva many years ago when he was in books that had been written by an author who was after all, with all his immense erudition, a house-holder, and though fairly advanced as a sādḥaka, was still miles away from final enlightenment. The only person to whom he would finally express this persistent and somewhat sinister doubt was Śīśir Kumar Brahmācārī who would listen to him in silence, knowing that any attempt to rid him of his skeptical brother-disciple – would be futile. Naturally,

Vanamālīdās could not bring himself to pose this (virtually unspeakable) question to his Gurudeva; and the only other person who would do this – namely, Brahmācārījī – remained, true to his character, silent. Things stood thus, when one day, Santadāsji Mahārāj turning to Brahmācārījī, who was then alone with him, remarked: "Vanamālīdās thinks that the views I had expressed and the tattvas (truths) I had expounded in my books while a house-holder, cannot be infallible. He does not know that everything I had written in those days was entirely the consequence of a boon ("vara") conferred on me by Bābā (his Gurudeva, Śrī Ramdas Kathia Babaji Maharaj)".

Another incident particularly deserves to be mentioned in this connection. Kṛṣṇadāsji Mahārāj, a distinguished and highly educated young sadhu disciple of Santadāsji Mahārāj was tormented for a long time by a similar doubt. While reading his Gurudeva's works, above all, in his "Vedānta Darśana", he had come across many passages of brilliant refutation and devastating criticism of Śaṅkarācārya's interpretation of Vedānta. Though fully convinced intellectually, of the validity of the author's trenchant and irrefutable arguments and analyses, the upright disciple could not forget or ignore the fact that Śaṅkarācārya had been a holy man, a great tapasvin (ascetic) and a strict and lifelong celibate – "naiṣṭhika brahmācārīn", while Tarakishore Choudhury was, notwithstanding his immense learning and a splendid intellect, a married man, a house-holder. And yet, it was the latter who had repeatedly and vigorously confuted the former with a formidable semblance of invincible rectitude. But even then – is it credible? Is it, that is to say, credible that in many crucial and fundamental issues relating to Vedānta, a learned and intellectual householder belonging to the modern age is right and a tapasvin and sannyāsin of the very highest order wrong?

He was dying to have this uneasy doubt resolved. The problem was – how to put the question (to his Gurudeva) which was so delicate in nature and almost insufferably presumptuous. Nevertheless, the tension kept mounting, and unable to endure it any longer, he suddenly decided one day to take the plunge and brave the hazards. It was afternoon. Santadāsji Mahārāj was resting in bed. With nerves all on edge, Kṛṣṇadāsji Mahārāj crept upto the room stealthily, and entering, sat on the floor, close to his bed on which his Gurudeva was lying.

OM HARIḤ

I, Śrī Tārākishore Śarmā Choudhury
dedicate this book humbly_ at the
blessed lotus feet

of

Śrī Śrī Śrī Śrī Śrī Śrī Rāmdās Kāthiabābāji

Mahanta Mahārāj who

belongs to the ancient

spiritual line founded

by

ŚrīŚrīŚrī Sanakādi Ṛṣis

and the foremost

among ṛṣis

hallowed by the name

of

Nimbārka

with

devotion and Love.

Śrī Śrī Śrī Gurudeva ! Just as a little boy seated on his mother's lap, untroubled by any fears, becomes charmed by looking at the radiant full moon in the boundless sky and extends his arms to grasp it, so, I too, tainted by the (inherent) depravity of the Kali-yuga and dull-witted, through your Grace, being placed in the midst of the society of ṛṣis enraptured by hearing the glorious name of Brahman and the singing of the supremely

exalted merits of the Brahmarṣis, started to write this book to proclaim and reveal them ; it is only by cherishing your name in my heart I was emboldened to compose this work and it is only through your encouragement and inspiration that I have been able to finish it. I am now offering it as a present at your blessed feet as a token of love. If you only graciously accept it, I should consider myself fulfilled and blessed. Just as the meaningless and inarticulate prattle of a child delights his parents, so, the childish attempt of this boy, who is incapable of proclaiming the glory of Brahman and the singing of the supremely exalted merits of the ṛṣis — if this (childish attempt) causes your pleasure in however small a measure, then, his joy will have no bounds. Though, apparently your connection with the gross (physical) body has been severed recently, you are, nevertheless, an immemorially old Brahmarṣi; the assumption of a body and the disappearance of it is only a līlā (play) of your's. Even today, I know with absolute certainty that you stand in as close a relationship with me as ever before; accepting therefore this loving gift from your child graciously, render him fulfilled and blessed.

OM HARIḤ, OM TAT SAT

Invocation

First I prostrate myself with my whole heart at the feet of my Śrī Gurudeva (Śrī Śrī Rāmdās Kāthiabābāji Mahārāj) and along with him to the great ancient ṛṣis Sanaka, Sananda, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra, to the great muni (sage) Nārada, to the founder of the Sampradāya (religions tradition) the “cakrāvatāra” (so called for his having held the cakra or discus to give his holy Brāhmaṇa sages get the impression that the Sun had not yet set) Bhagavān Nimbārkācārya and the great avadhūta (an ascetic of the highest order) Śrīman Nāgāji Maharaj (the initiator of our own branch of the line of Nimbārka) — remembering their blessed feet with loving reverence I prostrate myself devoutly. Then seeking refuge in Śrī Hari, the Paramātmā, I offer my salutation with my body, mind and speech to the gods, the ṛṣis, the gandharvas, the yakṣas, the rākṣasas, the human beings, beasts, birds, insects, the learned and the ignorant, the sinners and the blessed souls, the moving and immobile objects like mountains and trees and regarding all these as His divine manifestations. I pray to all of you to be gracious to me. I have made up my mind to sing the glories of the great ṛṣis of old who had realized the Brahman and expound Brahmanvidyā. I am on the one hand thoroughly worldly, and, on the other, devoid of learning—I do not have even a modicum of knowledge in the Sanskrit language. Why in spite of all this my mind has been naturally impelled to this task is a mystery which is known only to my all-seeing Śrī Gurudeva. Nevertheless I know if Śrī Gurudeva who is one with Govinda (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) becomes gracious to one no task becomes impossible for anyone; even a lame man can cross the mountain. Therefore remembering the holy feet of Śrī Guru-Govinda with deep love and devotion I set to work to write this book.

mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṁguṁ langhayate girim,
yatkpā tamahaṁ vande paramānandamādhavam.

—I salute Mādhava (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) who is Supreme Bliss, whose grace makes the dumb eloquent and the lame cross the mountains.

There cannot be any doubt that even the impossible can become possible if one gets divine Grace.

But the Paramātmā is present in all beings and objects; the entire Cosmos itself is His emanation. Hence, the holy and the unholy, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant—prostrating at the feet of all of them I humbly state that I have decided to undertake the task of setting forth Brahma-vidyā and extol the supreme virtues of the Brahmarṣis, the great ṛṣis who realized Brahman. My object will certainly be fulfilled if I get your blessings. And as for the Vaiṣṇava sādhus and bhaktas—your powers are limitless, that the Lord of the Universe and its Creator Himself has been constantly busy in fulfilling your wishes - all the śāstras have declared in one voice. So I prostrate myself at your feet over and over again; being kindly disposed you graciously bestow upon this humble person the boon that his object in writing this book may be accomplished and that this book may be capable of producing the intended effect.

Then, prostrating myself at the feet of Śrī Bhagavān Veda-vyāsa I pray for his grace, Veda-vyāsa - who by taking immense pains has disseminated for the jīvas depraved by the Kali-yuga dharma śāstras suited to all kinds of people, whose nectar-like words have been satisfying to this day the thirst for knowledge of the people at large in this land of India—that supremely compassionate Bhagavān Veda-vyāsa may kindly be gracious to me, so that by receiving his grace I may accomplish my intended mission.

OM TAT SAT

In 1881 the truth was revealed to me that the Brahmavidyā of ancient India will appear again and inspire the whole of mankind and the ṛṣis who realized Brahman will again make their appearance in modern India. When I expressed this matter to a spiritually highly advanced friend of mine, he, hearing this was extremely delighted and told me that he too had learnt this from a certain sādhu; he added however that before the advent of that blessed day long periods of natural calamities like epidemics will occur and afflict the people of India and through these the taint of sins besetting this land will be to a large extent removed. During the past twelve years or more India has suffered a series of unprecedented disasters like epidemics, famines, earthquakes, drought and excessive rain—a fact which to me demonstrates the truth of my friend's statements. It seems to me now that perhaps the period of chastening is soon going to come to an end. I have heard from the mouth of a sādhu that this will happen after a short while; it will then be followed by blessed days for the world.

The people of India should know that the arrival of men from the West in this land is not an accident. I have heard it from a ṛṣi that when Sītā, the daughter of Janaka was abducted by the king of Lankā and kept in the Ashoka Garden, an Ogress belonging to the royal family (of Lankā) by looking after and serving her with tender devotion greatly pleased her. Later, after the advent of Śrī Rāmacandra in the island of Lankā the blessed benefactress of the people at large, Sītādevi bestowed on Trijaṭā the boon of dominion over the whole of India in Kali-yuga and it is through the result of this boon that the British have won the dominion of this land. Through their advent in this land the world has benefited and will do so in future.¹

The great ṛṣis whose supreme glory is "samadarśana" (equal mindedness) will, utilizing the occasion of the advent of the British in India, sow the seed of Brahmanvidyā among the whole of mankind. Indians! If you gaze around expanding your range of vision will come to know that there is no reason to regard these words as a wild fancy. The intense interest that is felt now-a-days among learned philosophers of modern Europe testifies to the truth of this assertion. The manner in which the ancient wisdom of India has shed its radiance in the land of America also demonstrate the validity of this statement. One of the most distinguished disciples of the most revered Śrī Rāmakrishna Paramahansa, the late Swami Vivekānanda, by presenting himself in an august assembly of eminent representatives of various religions in America enraptured the audience by revealing only a faint suggestion of the Vedānta—this too is a strong proof of this affirmation. We know,

It is true that there are some today who think that India has been harmed by the advent of the British in this land; but those who will think deeply over the matter will realize that owing to the establishment of an empire by foreigners embracing a different religion, all the diverse communities of India being ruled equally and impartially have learnt to give up hostile feelings towards one another and the conduct of day to day life of the people being regulated by law and order men have now got the opportunity to direct our thoughts collectively towards social reforms and other matters of general concern. There have been many such other benefits as well. Through the reading of histories of foreign people the minds of Indians have broadened; through the study of Western Science the people of India have again begun to discuss the nature of the physical world and by coming to know about the patriotism of foreigners the people of India are making an effort to unite themselves again inspired by the spirit of nationalism. Through the endeavours of the "Theosophists" and great scholars like Maxmuller the glory and wisdom of ancient India have been aroused in the memory of the Indians and the hearts of many educated people have begun to be thrilled by the name of the Āryas. Nevertheless, there is nothing in this world that is wholly delightful and beneficial. It must therefore be admitted that the introduction of foreign rule has been the cause of many evils and misfortunes as well; but by directing our attention only to this and to close our eyes to the other great benefits done to us is not right.

as a matter of fact, that in India, even today, sādhakas who are immeasurably more powerful than Vivekānanda are being witnessed in many places. Compared to them Vivekānanda is no more than a mere boy. Nevertheless, though a boy he is a lion cub; no wonder therefore, that other could not rival him in (spiritual) power. Hence, can there be any reason for doubt that if these lion like men actually made their appearance in public the entire human race inhabiting this planet will undergo a change of spirit?

But how can one believe that the ṛṣis will reveal themselves? The Kali-yuga has already started, so people have a natural propensity towards “adharmā”; under these circumstances how can one hope that Brahmavidyā will be revealed at such a time and the Brahman-knowing ṛṣis will make their appearance? Such a question, no doubt, may naturally arise in the minds of the people. Nevertheless, if one reflects on the matter deeply one will come to believe that even in this Kali-yuga it will not be strange if such a thing happens. Kali-yuga is indeed the age in which “tamoguṇa” (the principle of darkness and ignorance) becomes dominant. But unmixed tamoguṇa can never exist; “sattvagūṇa” (the principle of light and knowledge) and “rajoguṇa” (the principle of motion and action) are always mingled with tamoguṇa even in Kali-yuga. Just as in Astrology, during the dominant phase of a particular planet, the “bhoga” (suffering) due to other grahas (“graha” – planets as identified in Indian Astrology) too occurs for comparatively brief periods within this dominant phase so, in this tamas-dominated Kali-yuga there are brief periods during which one experiences the conditions of the sattva-dominated Satya-yuga and the rajas-dominated Tretā and Dvāpara yuga. Even during Satya-yuga and the other two yugas (Tretā and Dvāpara) at certain times the demons with the characteristics of Kali like Hiraṇyakaśipu and others became dominant and thus diminished the span of those yugas.

The Pourāṇikas tell us that when, after the termination of the fixed period of dominance of Satya-yuga the period of bhoga (enjoyment) by Tretā was about to begin the Satya-yuga objected to Śrī Bhagavān (the Divine Lord) that a large part of his period of bhoga was dominated by the demons characterized by the nature of Kali; hence, at those times Satya-yuga was deprived of his natural term for bhoga; so the beginning of the period of bhoga of Tretā-yuga should be delayed. At this, Śrī Bhagavān remarked that the portion of the bhoga-kāla (period of enjoyment) of Satya-yuga that was lost due to the domination of the asuras, the bhoga of an equivalent period of time will be obtained by Satya-yuga in Kali-yuga. He further said that it was He himself who had ordained this; for, in Kali-yuga the suffering and ignorance of jīvas will be greatly aggravated. In that age unless the bhoga of Satya-yuga was not occasionally allowed to take place the suffering of the people of Kali-yuga will become absolutely unendurable. This is why God Himself arranged for the occasional insertion of brief spells of Kali in Satya and the bhoga of Satya during Kali.

A close study of India during Kali-yuga will testify to the truth of this remark. At the end of the reign of Parīkṣit (the son of Abhimanyu) and his son Janamejaya the stream of Kali flowing with tremendous speed plunged the people of India in abysmal depths of "adharma" (loss of rectitude) and the practice of Vedic rituals was reduced to a mere external display. It was then, that Śrī Bhagavān incarnated himself as Śākyasimha (the Buddha) and by disseminating a dharma suited to the times re-established peace and harmony in the world. For some time since then cries of joy could be heard in the homes of this land and the light of knowledge from India spreading over a wide region gladdened the hearts of the people at large. Nevertheless, after a short while the flow of Kali accelerated reducing Buddhism to the atheistic doctrines of All as Void (Sarvaśūnya vāda) and Vijñānavāda and thus all but ruined the study of Vedānta and tarnished the very

sense of religion among the people; all this resulted in widespread despair and cries of lamentation. After the passage of some time when the suffering and ignorance of human beings greatly increased there appeared in this land two great personalities—Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, a partial “avatāra” (incarnation) of Kumāra (Kārtikeya) and Śaṁkarācārya, a partial avatāra of Śaṁkara (Shiva); the rapid spread of their fame and the wide and powerful impact of their intellectual vigour combined to expel from India the atheistic doctrines of degenerated Buddhism.² In course of time however Śaṁkarācārya’s doctrine was reduced to mere dry controversy and debate and the force of Time resumed its inexorable course; the sense of righteousness (dharma) rapidly declined; alien races invaded India and established their dominion and the cries of distress of the people of India rent the air. Then great religious personalities like Śrī Gourāṅgadeva (Chaitanya), Guru Nānak, Nābhāji and others appeared in diverse regions of India and reestablished to some extent, even in such troubled times, peace and pure knowledge. But under the powerful influence of Kali their teachings too became devoid of substance and have now been reduced, in many places trivial disputations and mere pretense. The Indian people have thus fallen into a state of extreme misery and adharma. The land of India has now been turned into the abode of people who are mutually hostile, mutually oppressive, slander-mongering, dissolute, mean-minded and hypocritical. The Hindu race who take pride in their reverence for the cow who is looked upon as a goddess and glorified as such in their dharmaśāstras (religious texts)—the very same Hindus perpetrate everyday and in public the kind of atrocities on these cows in many places, which are rarely, if ever to be witnessed among any other people of the world. In this very city of Calcutta when one sees the condition of

² On other occasions, both earlier and later, comparatively lesser personalities appeared; but a detailed account of their achievements lies outside the purview of this book; the general rule, however, is everywhere the same.

the bullocks that draw carts, it seems as though God had destined them to be born in India to be thus starved and whipped so mercilessly that they finally give up their lives. From this one single-instance one can realize to what level the baseness of heart and irreligion of the people of India have reached. It really seems that India now has reached the furthest limit of suffering and ignorance. The people, at this moment have reached a state in which it cannot be expected that the manifestation of such power as was exhibited even by such great men as the Buddha, Śaṅkara, Nānak and Chaitanya would be adequate; to remove the inner depravity of the people only the advent of great men who are willing to manifest even greater spiritual powers than their great predecessors just mentioned would be needed. But unless this (moral and spiritual) depravity is removed the very survival of the Hindu race will be at stake; for the natural and characteristic quality of the Hindus is dharma. If this (dharma) is destroyed the extinction of this race as a distinct entity is inevitable. But such an event is not possible. If the Hindu race becomes extinct one of the finest products of God's creative marvel will disappear from the face of the earth. Though lapsed into a state of decline in all other spheres, among the Hindu race in India, the highest of all kinds of human knowledge, namely spiritual knowledge shines even today in some places with an effulgence that is unparalleled elsewhere in the world. With the extinction of the Hindu race all this will disappear from the face of the earth. It is impossible to believe that such a thing can be intended by the Divine Providence.

On the one hand this is the present condition of India. On the other hand, among western people scientific inquiry has advanced so much that the teachings of the religions that are prevalent in their respective countries are failing to attract them any longer. Religious revolutions are taking place everywhere. So for the satisfaction of their thirst for knowledge and the attainment of peace no other way is now visible except the

dissemination of the immemorial Brahnavidyā of ancient India. But speaking generally it is only the Indian body that has been capable from very ancient times, of fully comprehending this supreme knowledge; and through a divine design it is in this land of India that there has occurred a remarkable combination of peoples from the Western countries. Hence it is through this instrumentality of Western rule that the equal-minded ṛṣis will rouse the Indian people again and through them initiate the people of other Western countries in Brahnavidyā. The advent of that auspicious day is not far off. So let the Indians, freeing themselves from ill-will towards one another as well as towards the western people prepare themselves with a mind pure and free from malice for that happy and blessed development, and begin to cultivate the habit of self-restraint and discipline. The ancient sage (ṛṣi) who had engaged himself in practising tapasyā in Badarikāshrama (in the Himalayas) for the general well-being of India, will soon manifest himself and dispel the massive ignorance and distress of the world.

If a famous merchant, who intends to go to a certain country with the collection of precious merchandise sends an envoy first to attract the people and his messengers announce the news of his auspicious advent with the beating of drums; in a similar manner I too have undertaken to announce the advent of the ṛṣis and the news of the inestimable treasure of Brahnavidyā that they had acquired by beating the drum which is the present book. Nevertheless, just as without seeing (the treasure) at first hand by approaching the great merchant it is not possible, only by listening to the superficial and fanciful descriptions of the messengers, to have a real knowledge of the carefully cherished invaluable treasures of the great merchant, so it is impossible to obtain a real knowledge of Brahnavidyā by this predominantly superficial discourse of mine. Nevertheless, if by reading this book any person is encouraged to undertake a search for

the ṛṣis and after a visit to them is enabled to receive the sādhanā of Brahmavidyā directly from them, then and only then, shall I consider my endeavour to be successful.

And my humble appeal to the British rulers is that they should not, because this country has come under their dominion, may not disdainfully look down upon the people of India; and further they should not forget that it is only through sincere devotion to the subjects that imperial authority becomes firmly established. Owing to long subjection to foreign rule and various other causes in the character of the Indian people today such inhuman drawbacks have developed that the spectacle of them no doubt naturally arouses contempt. And yet a sensible person will notice after a careful investigation that even in the midst of all these grave defects there still exist such virtues in the inner nature of the Indian people as are rare elsewhere. Even if anyone is unable to notice it, the royal rulers ought to remember that persons who are selfish and vain can never attract the respect and love of anyone, and if it fails to inspire respect and love among the subjects, even immense royal splendour is never able to cause happiness, on the contrary, it languishes in a short while. This is the perennial law of this world. And I would like in particular to state that the British race having conquered the territory of India, England and, generally, all Western countries have achieved material prosperity; so, by their presence in India the light of their spiritual knowledge too will, no doubt, intensify soon. Hence, for the rulers of these countries the best thing in all respects will be to cherish cordial feelings towards the Indian people. If they learn to entertain genuine friendly feelings towards the Indians renouncing all hypocrisy then what all of us have heard regarding the imminent advent of blissful days, the fruits of that both will be able to enjoy un-interruptedly for a long time and neither of the two sides will then be a cause of each other's suffering and distress.

The purpose and the theme of the book

The land of India has now turned into a place bristling with all sorts of upheavals and turmoil. The very foundation of the immemorial dharma of the Hindus has reached a state of total decline. After the upheavals during thousands of years what little remained of the Indian social order has now become faint and feeble after the impact of the alien ideals of the materially prosperous West. The whole country is now in a turmoil caused by political unrest generated by the Western mode of education. The young men of India are rendered bewildered and aimless; some among them, rejecting contemptuously the religion and the manners and customs of the Āryas have become fond of imitating the West in every way; some others, like the people of Western nations becoming almost mad to achieve political independence have determined to collect funds by robbery in order to deliver the country (from foreign yoke) and being sentenced by the ruling authorities are thrown into prisons; yet others, throwing to the winds all thoughts about social norms and humanity, and convinced that to earn money is the sole object of life have busied themselves all the time to achieve their own material prosperity. The majority of the middle class people, seeing a state of turmoil all around becoming confused and bewildered are spending their lives anxiously engrossed by the thought of somehow getting their food and clothing smoothly.

Under these circumstances to instill genuine love of religion and also to try to direct their stream of thoughts towards the perennial dharma taught by the ancient Āryas is one of the objects of writing this book. When the Hindu race was at its heights of excellence

dharma was the very life of the Indian people; it was through this (dharma) that India had been at one time the noblest of all nations in the world, the most glorious. No doubt the Indian people had at one time enjoyed even material prosperity and felicity in abundant measure; at the very beginning of this book an attempt has been made to demonstrate this. But all these were the outcome of the excellence of their dharma; mundane felicity had never been the main object of the life of the Indian people. The Indians have degenerated because of their lapse from dharma; even their worldly happiness has disappeared and this subjection to foreign rule which the Indian youth are feeling as intolerable—that too is a consequence of this lapse from dharma. I have heard from a great and exalted person who is also a great yogin that five thousand years ago when in the presence of hundreds of distinguished kṣatriya prince and princess, Draupadi, who was an embodiment of chastity, helpless, suffering from the menstrual period, clad in a single cloth was forcibly dragged into the royal hall of the Kauravas - Duḥśāsana, whose evil nature was tainted by the influence of Kali - tried in front of the assembled royal personages, to strip a most exalted and chaste princess of her garment and when, fallen in that condition the most righteous princess made repeated appeals to the sense of dharma, of justice of the assembled princes, the kṣatriya royal personages, whose nature were also tainted by Kali, remained silent and gave no reply. Then some of the great sages present there witnessing such a degradation of dharma in this land of the Āryas and finding it intolerable cursed the kṣatriya princes of India, saying let the kṣatriyas of India perish, and let the profession of the kṣatriyas flourish and take refuge among the people of other regions. Immediately after this the kṣatriya princes perished in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, and to this day kṣatriya valour in India has remained all but extinct. It is my firm conviction that the chief cause of the decline of India is its lapse from dharma. It is true, however, that the prosperity of some persons is not destroyed even by

the practice of adharma (unrighteousness); but the man who is naturally virtuous, can never outlive unrighteous conduct (adharma). There is nothing surprising in this. A person who is naturally tainted cannot be defiled by any other tainted object; a person, on the other hand, who is naturally pure is easily tainted by the contact of an unclean object. The nature of the Indian people is naturally prone to religion (dharma); it is the special favour of divine Providence towards the Indians. So long as the Indians will dishonour this special divine grace, they will continue to suffer divine chastisement; there is nothing strange in this. Before the divine Lord can render us prosperous by conferring on us political independence we must first consider whether, we at present happen to possess the requisite degree of righteousness and moral excellence. If one carefully observes our present condition everywhere, it is apparently inconceivable that this nation had ever been or will ever be capable of noble achievements. If one observes the behaviour in many places, of the rich towards the poor and the poor towards the rich, of the landlord towards his subjects and the subjects towards the landlords, of the servant toward his master and of the master towards the servant — and generally of the strong towards the weak and of the weak towards the strong—does it seem at all that religion ever existed in this land? I am not speaking about comparing with other countries; most of us do not have much knowledge about them. But from what we are observing regarding the nature of the people of this country, can we consider them as, in the judgement of the divine Providence, worthy of happiness and prosperity? It is true that everybody longs for political independence; it is also true that political subjection is the cause of untold distress and trouble. Nevertheless, it must be admitted we have suffered subjection on account of our "karma". And considering how selfish, mutually hostile, narrow-minded and hypocritical we are now, even if we get independence all on a sudden, it is difficult to believe that we shall be able to utilize it in a fitting manner. The nation that is now ruling us is not a weak

one and is fully able and willing to prevent us from attaining independence. Nobody gives up such an empire easily. Even among us if anyone ever achieves power in any sphere, is such a person usually seen to renounce it willingly? Then how can one believe that foreign rulers will easily part with their immense authority? There is in our character no such attraction as to impress or fascinate them; we possess no such force as to frighten them. Being weak and bereft of "dharma" we cannot trust one another, and indeed many of us really are unworthy of being fully trusted; in the present condition therefore unity is impossible to achieve among us. It must also be remembered that the manner in which people of the Western countries, rich and poor alike get into a frenzy in the name of political independence, is not natural to us; in our country the common people are not intoxicated by the idea of (political) independence. Good or bad, this is the present state of our country. There is no reason to believe therefore that the manner in which political agitation is going on in our country, any real good to our country will be done. On the contrary this agitation, degenerating in some places into downright robbery has only aggravated unrest in our country.¹ Nevertheless, even during period of decline the Indian people are seen even today to be infused with enthusiasm in the name of religion. This enthusiasm has nothing to do with demonic frenzy. "Enter into hostility with others, subjugate him with applying brute force, rob him of his wealth, wife and daughters"—zeal of this kind has not yet characterized Hindus in general. It is evident, therefore, that even when fallen on evil days the inner, inherent nature of the Hindu race is naturally inclined to

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I do not mean to say however that no good has been done to our country by political agitation. Every action has both evil and good effects; by the agitation too, doubtless, many good effects have been produced; for instance as a consequence of this people have become more eager and more interested in trade and commerce. Nevertheless these consequences are only incidental, not direct.

the cultivation of religion. Hence, renouncing political agitation with dubious consequences, so that the Hindus may engage themselves in religious activities which are the prime cause of their mundane and celestial glory—to encourage them to do this is one of the aims of this book. To advocate distrust in action (karma) is not the purpose of this book; on the contrary, to urge the people belonging to our society to the performance of the right kind of action in accordance with the teachings of the śāstras—this is the chief object of this book. In this land of India nobody ever achieved abiding progress without “tapasyā” (practice of ascetic austerities); when one’s mind is purified through tapasyā one can receive the grace of the divine Providence; if he becomes gracious nothing remains unattainable by the jīva. At this moment, without developing our own character by adopting that perennial method, without making any attempt to purify the hearts of the common people, the effort and the expectation to wrest political independence by force are not at all likely to be fulfilled. Every action has its own right method, and the method that is apt to be fruitful in one country may not be so in another; one should engage in action keeping this in mind. Dharma is the natural characteristic of the Indian people. In this country from ancient times down to our own, whoever achieved anything that is noble, had done so by virtue of the power of dharma; even political affairs are not outside this rule. The great sage Veda-Vyāsa himself has related in the Mahābhārata and other sacred texts that even Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, who were both divine avatāras accomplished their intended work receiving boons after performing tapasyā themselves. Considering himself utterly unable to vanquish in battle the great (Kaurava) warriors like Bhīṣma, Droṇa and Karṇa, Arjuna after practicing intense tapasyā in the upper regions of the Himalayas and thus acquiring supernatural strength engaged in battle; and defeated the enemies. The legend has it that Śrī Rāmachandra, after worshipping the Goddess (Durgā) and receiving her boon proceeded to slay Rāvaṇa. Such examples abound in

ancient Hindu scriptures. This is time-honoured process prevalent in India; the consequence of this is that even when one accomplishes a deed that is beyond the capacity of others, one does not become proud; for the agent of the difficult fit knows that it was not accomplished through his own power. In social affairs to perform prescribed acts without egoism is the truly divine and "ārya" attitude, it is Indian ideal par excellence. Abandoning this attitude to adopt the demonic one will not lead to the good of this country. Just as when a wicked person turns independent he becomes the cause of mischief to himself as well as his neighbours; in like manner if a nation with a demonic nature becomes free it does not become an instrument of good to itself or to others; on the contrary it becomes a cause of mischief. Therefore we should now make a whole-hearted effort to promote the observance of our ancient and traditional dharma, so that our character becomes pure and clean, our heart large and generous. It is the matter of regret however that the Hindu religion having been in many places misinterpreted, either degenerated into momentary sentimentalism or the dry intellectualism of Māyāvāda. On the other hand, respect for the ancient ṛṣis who realized Brahman, through the power of whose vast and limitless knowledge India had at one time occupied the highest place in the whole world has almost disappeared at many places now even among religious communities and sects. We have begun to regard the ṛṣis as "learned"-men of some sort. This is why a special attempt has been made at the very outset of this book to establish the all-round and supreme excellence of the ṛṣis of old. If a feeling of faith and adoration towards them is aroused, a desire to follow the spiritual methods taught by them will be generated —this alone is my hope. The original Brahmavidyā —which is indeed the ultimate source of all other kinds of knowledge — an attempt has been made in this book to represent it as far as it has been revealed to me through the teachings received from my Guru with relevant evidence, from the śāstras. And finally in volumes 2, 3 and 4 of

what I have called "Dārśanika (philosophical) Brahnavidyā" — I have tried to explain, with the help of old and authentic commentaries, the famous "Six Systems of Indian Philosophy" (Ṣaḍdarśana), in particular Sāṃkhya, Pātañjala (Yoga) and Vedānta (Brahmasūtra) and then, by pointing out the special aptitudes (of spiritual secrets) for different "Darśanas" (spiritual philosophies), I have also made an attempt to reconcile and harmonize imagined contradictions among them. The hidden and seminal concepts of Brahnavidyā have been revealed by the Maharṣis (great sages) in Vedānta, Pātañjala and Sāṃkhya philosophies; to know Brahnavidyā one should read these philosophies (Darśanas). This present volume entitled, "Brahmavādi Ṛṣi O Brahnavidyā" may be regarded as an Introduction to "Philosophical Brahnavidyā" (Dārśanika Brahnavidyā) in three Volumes. If after reading this book at least some reverence and devotion towards the great Ārya ṛṣis and their revealed spiritual religion is aroused and trust in the performance of actions prescribed by the śāstras is generated I shall consider my labour crowned with success.

4. Conclusion

To those who have been educated on the Western pattern and by being guided solely by a contentious spirit and noting the degraded state of the present Hindu society have become sceptical towards the traditional Hindu religion, my humble submission is this: those arguments that are now-a-days employed against Hinduism and other religions of the world—all these (arguments) I have been discussing myself for a considerably long period of time with a thoroughly independent mind from the age of sixteen onwards; and as a result of that I too had remained sceptical about religion for a long time. Nevertheless having received direct proof of (the Truths of) Religion through the power of the gods and the ṛṣis I have now come to believe in it, and by practicing it in some measure myself I am realizing too its truth and validity. As a matter of fact the substantiality of religion can be

perceived only through practice; it is very difficult to comprehend it fully by means of superficial arguments and disputes. Every human being actually feels that taking food generates blood in the body; yet if any one says that unless it is clearly explained by arguments to him how through the intake of food comprising various substances and qualities, blood, milk, semen and bones are produced in the body he won't eat, then how exceedingly difficult it will be to make him take food by convincing him with arguments will be plain to all after a little reflection. It must be admitted that in comparison with that the concepts of jīva (the individual soul), the jagat (the world) and Īśvara (God) are much more difficult; hence, there should not be any doubt that to generate knowledge and belief in supra-sensory and abstruse matters by means of arguments based on ordinary sense-perception (and the knowledge it generates) is thousand times more difficult. Hence, if anybody wishes to settle all matters relating to religious concepts by means of arguments like the demonstrations of geometrical propositions, there is little chance of his wishes being fulfilled. However, of the supernatural powers of the ṛṣis I have witnessed and the evidence for the truths of religion that I have directly received I have written nothing in this book; since it is impossible for persons educated through the English method to believe in them; hence by doing that, instead of any good result being achieved it is likely to arouse distrust and disrespect towards this book and its author. I have tried therefore to establish and explain my subject by means of reasoning and arguments only. If by that a desire in our people to know what the now almost extinct knowledge of ancient India was like is increased — even then I shall consider myself fulfilled in my mission.

And to the society of learned men of India my appeal is: I am not a scholar but only a worldly man belonging to the legal profession; so I have no rivalry with any one belonging to the learned society. My lack of learning is so great that I have little proficiency in the rudiments of Sanskrit grammar. But I happened to be blessed with an extraordinary good

fortune; for I have received Grace from the Great; through that Grace even the most recondite philosophical texts have revealed to me their hidden treasures of knowledge like a loving mother; Seeing this I have myself been surprised occasionally. Among the learned in the Hindu society it is universally accepted that Bhagavān Veda-Vyāsa, Maharṣi Kapila, Patañjali and Gautama all these Siddharṣis (enlightened ṛṣis) were persons of authority who were completely free from all errors and lapses; hence, it is impossible that there should be any real differences of opinions among them. It must be admitted therefore that the apparent contradictions noted in their works must be capable of being resolved in some way or other. In my mind through the grace of my Śrī Gurudeva a method capable of harmonizing the various philosophical texts (composed by great ṛṣis of old) has been revealed; I have undertaken to publish this book trusting that it will benefit the scholars of our country. In accordance with differences in place, time and the fitness of recipients the manner of teaching and disseminating religious concepts undergoes changes and deviations; hence though it has been forbidden in the śāstras to impart knowledge unasked to an incompetent recipient; yet there have occurred radical changes in the former social structure; there no longer exists āśramas (hermitages) of enlightened sages competent to teach Brahnavidyā; hence, there is no opportunity for people with a thirst for knowledge to approach them. In particular, for sometime past it looks as though the Hindu religion is on the verge of becoming extinct. It is legitimate therefore to think that for the śāstras and for the Hindu religion itself the present age is a period of crisis (āpatkāla). I would therefore appeal to the erudite persons not to be uncharitable towards me because I have revealed to the people at large a small part of Brahnavidyā. In times of crisis even the great ṛṣis of old had accepted gifts from unworthy persons. My humble submission to the learned society of our country therefore is this: though I happen to be an unlearned and worldly person that they may not, during this period of national

crisis, shrink from discussing this book because the author happens to be an unworthy person. I have demonstrated in this book a kind of reconciliation and harmonious solution between various systems of Indian philosophy; if their reflective faculty is independently exercised in this direction may be they will be able to achieve a solution that is even better than this through the grace of god. There is no question therefore of any conflict with me. I am not a scholar, nor am I infallible; to fall into error for me therefore is nothing strange; my humble petition to the scholars is that may the respected men of learning, kindly ignoring my errors and lapses, make it convenient to ponder and discuss the theme of this book.

And, finally, to the people in general belonging to the Hindu society: In this book an attempt has been made to give an account of the supreme glory of the Brahman-knowing ṛṣis of old, the crown of the great Āryas of ancient India and Brahmagyā; so whatever may be the literary abilities of the present author, the subjects dealt with in this book will surely cause them to feel delighted. Besides, just as any other wood becomes fragrant when placed in contact with sandal wood, as coming in touch with the philosopher's stone the ugly-looking iron is turned into gold, as even the worst of sinners becomes magnanimous in the company of the virtuous and the holy, so, though the author of this book is an unlearned, dull-witted and worldly person, by virtue of the glory of the great Brahmagyādin ṛṣis of old and the intrinsic power of Brahmagyā —both subjects dealt with in the book—this book too will have attained the power of causing delight. Especially, I have dedicated this book at the outset to my deeply revered Brahmagyā Gurudeva; receiving this book as a token of grace from him I now present myself to the reading public in general earnestly requesting them to enjoy it; I hope and pray that by this they will indeed derive joy.

OM TAT SAT

CHAPTER – I

FIRST QUARTER: INDIA IS HOLY LAND

India is holy land. Its very dust particles are hallowed by the feet of the ṛṣis (sages) who were Brahmovādins – “Who knew and discussed the nature of ultimate Reality – Brahman”. It is in this land that, thanks to these ṛṣis who had attained the full knowledge of Brahman, “Brahmavidyā”, the highest knowledge – knowledge of the origin, continued existence and final dissolution of the universe, the nature of the individual soul (jīva), and finally, that supreme knowledge of Parabrahman which ends all our sufferings forever.

This Brahmavidyā happens to be the special study of Indians, and though fallen on evil days, it is the Hindus in India who have preserved, against heavy odds, this Brahmavidyā; the Hindus, for obvious reasons, have a special aptitude for it – Brahmavidyā.

There is no reason here to fear any partiality on the part of the Creator, the Controller of the universe, for diversity is the rule that governs the phenomenal world, which owes its manifestation, indeed its very existence, to the possibility of variety and multiplicity. No two things in this world are alike in every respect; there is some special quality in every object; bereft of this distinctive feature, the object cannot conceivably exist. The flora and fauna of one country, for example, are never exactly similar in their form and nature to those of another. This is the perennial and natural law of the world.

Just as every individual human being has his (or her) distinctive appearance and nature, so have the people of a particular country or race, who differ in their form and nature from those who belong to other countries and races. It follows that a certain kind of activity which is characteristic of a particular people, will not be congenial to another with a different nature and temperament.

Just as water, unless there is some obstacle in the way, tends everywhere to flow downwards, so a human being tends, if there is no serious impediment, to pursue a course of action which is congenial to him. And what is true of individual human beings is equally true of particular races as well. The temperament of the Indian Āryas is naturally prone to spiritual thinking. The study of the ultimate Reality or Brahmanvidyā, therefore, has been cultivated in this land with a thoroughness unparalleled elsewhere; it is here therefore, that this special study has achieved supreme consummation. Religion, no doubt, has been cultivated in other countries as well, for it is something that is innate in man; in varying degrees and in some form or another, therefore, every people on earth have their own religion. But in other religious traditions the final goal of religion is only the

attainment of some sort of Heaven; in the religious scriptures of other countries God has been described as the Ruler and Lord of a particular kind of Heaven and worshipped as such by the inhabitants of those countries. But it is in India and in India alone that the whole truth about Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, the One without a second who pervades All, has been fully revealed; and it is here in India, that the ṛṣis, the great seers of old revealed that to become one with Brahman, the non-dual Reality, is the final aim of human existence. This knowledge does not exist anywhere else.

To the ancient seers, ṛṣis who, in order to get full and exhaustive knowledge of the phenomenal world (jagat), and the individual soul (jīva) and God (Īśvara) sank into deep meditation, words appeared; disembodied words that first revealed to them the nature of these ultimate verities. These ethereal messages are known in India as “śrutis” + “hearing” (that which is heard). After having heard these śrutis and adopting the spiritual practices (sādhana) enjoined by them, the sages had achieved a distinct vision of the Supreme Brahman and thus earned the title of “omniscient.” Having mastered this supreme knowledge they imparted it to their devoted disciples according to their receptive capacities in different ways; thus, gradually, the knowledge of Reality was disseminated in India. For the spiritual benefit of the people at large they had elucidated and expanded the śrutis and thus composed the various śāstras (authoritative scriptures) like Itihāsa (History), Purāṇa (Legend) and sacred texts remembered and transmitted (Smṛtis). The śāstras dealing with Brahmanavidyā are therefore, very extensive. Among these, most of the extant Purāṇas and Itihāsas (like the Mahābhārata) were composed by the great seer, Veda-Vyāsa (Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana).

Now, in ancient India, the great spiritual teachers who had known the Ultimate Reality - Brahman, often set forth their teachings in tersely formulated aphorisms (sūtras). This method of pedagogy was adopted so that the lessons imparted were deeply imprinted on the minds of the disciples. This aphorisms came to be known later as Darśanas (systems of Metaphysics). Among these Darśanas the most important and widely known are six; they are (1) The Pūrvamīmāṃsā, (2) The Vaiśeṣika, (3) The Nyāya, (4) The Sāṃkhya, (5) The Pātañjala or Yoga-sūtra and (6) The Brahmanīmāṃsā or Uttaramīmāṃsā or Vedānta or Brahmasūtra (the last three are various names of Brahmanīmāṃsā).

The authors of these six systems of Philosophy, Ṣaḍ-darśana, are Jaimini (Pūrvamīmāṃsā), Kaṇāda (Vaiśeṣika), Gautama (Nyāya), Kapila (the chief and the oldest among the teachers of Sāṃkhya), Patañjali (Yoga-sūtra) and Vyāsa (Vedānta) – all great seers (Maharṣi). For the followers of the Yoga-way the Pātañjala Darśana is extremely valuable; the great seer Vyāsa himself wrote a commentary on it which is extant even today; and because it was written by the great sage Vyāsa himself, it is almost as precious as the original sūtras.²

This commentary on Yoga-sūtras by Vyāsa is very profound; one who has mastered it thoroughly can understand clearly the deepest secrets of the spiritual literature of the Hindus. Some modern scholars however have expressed their doubts regarding the identity of Vyāsa in the present context; they argue that the term “Vedavyāsa” (or, simply

² As a matter of fact the composition of this book got started with my attempts at teaching a pupil the Yogasūtras of Patañjali. Later, considering the importance of the subject, I expanded these discourses into the form of a book meant for the general public. All the other systems of Philosophy also were incorporated into it.

"Vyāsa") signifies only a title, and therefore it is not the **name** of a person; whether the commentator of the Yogasūtras is the same person as the ṛṣi Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, is a matter which cannot therefore be determined with certainty; it is quite possible, on the other hand, that the author of this Bhaṣya (commentary) was another person with the same title - Vyāsa.

That Veda Vyāsa is a title is true; but in the present Yuga (age-cycle) only Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, and no other sage, can lay claim to this title; and like his predecessors holding the same title in previous Yugas, he too, as infallible. The names of these previous Vyāsas have been clearly mentioned in Chapter 3, Section I of the Devī -Bhāgavata Purāṇa:

Sūta said:

manvantareṣu sarveṣa dvāpare dvāpare yuge,
prāduḥkaroti dharmārthī purāṇāni yathāvidhi.

dvāpare dvāpare viṣṇurvyāsarūpeṇa sarvadā,
vedamekaṃ sa vahudhā kurute hitakāmyayā.

alpāyuyo'lpabuddhīmśca viprān jñātvā kalāvatha,
purāṇasaṃhitāṃ puṇyāṃ kurute'sau yuge yuge.

strīśūdradvijavandhūnāṃ na vedaśravaṇāṃ matam,
teṣāmeva hitārthāya purāṇāni kṛtāni ca.

manvantare saptame'tra śubhe vaivasvatābhidhe,
aṣṭāvimśatime prāpte dvāpare munisattamāḥ.

vyāsaḥ satyavatīsūnurgururme dharmavittamaḥ,
ekonotrimśat samprāpte drouṇirvyāso bhaviṣyati.

atī tāstu tathā vyāsāḥ saptavimśatireva ca,
purāṇasamhitāstaistu kathitāstu yuge yuge.

The sages said:

vrūhi sūta ! mahābhāga ! vyāsāḥ pūrvayugodbhavāḥ,
vaktārastu purāṇānam dvāpare dvāpare yuge.

Sūta said:

dvāpare prathame vyastāḥ svayaṁ vedāḥ svayambhuvā,
prajāpatidvītyetu dvāpare vyāsakāryakṛt.

trītiye cośanā vyāsaścaturthe tu vṛhaspatiḥ,
pañcame savitā vyāsaḥ ṣaṣṭhe mṛtyustathāpare.

maghavā saptame prāpte vaśiṣṭhastvaṣṭame smṛtaḥ,
sārasvatastu navame tridhāmā daśame tathā.

ekādase'tha trivṛṣo bharadvājastataḥ param,
trayodaśe cāntarīkṣo dharmāścāpi caturdaśe.

trayyāruṇiḥ pañcadaśe ṣoḍaśe tu dhanañjayah,
medhātithiḥ saptadaśe vratī hyaṣṭādaśe tathā.

atirekonovimśe'tha gautamastu tataḥ param,
uttamaśaikavimśe'tha haryātmā parkīrtitah.

beṇo vājaśravaścaiva somo'muṣyāyaṇastathā,
tṛṇavindustathāvyāso bhārgavastu tataḥ param.

tataḥ śaktirjātukarṇyah Kṛṣṇadvaipāyanastataḥ,
aṣṭāvimśatisakhyeyaṁ kathitā yā mayā śrutā.

Sūta said: In the Dvāpara-yuga of every "Manvantara", Vyāsa reveals according to prescribed rules, the Purāṇas. Viṣṇu Himself as Vyāsa in every Dvāpara-yuga divides the one Veda into many for the well-being of the world. Knowing that the Brāhmaṇas of the Kali-yuga would be short-lived and slow of wit, Bhagavān (Viṣṇu) reveals the sacred Purāṇa-saṁhitās in every Dvāpara-yuga. He composed these Purāṇas for the spiritual benefit of those who are not entitled to the study of the Vedas, namely, women, śūdras and the inferior dvijas (Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas). (The meaning of this is that dharma declines in the Kali-yuga, and therefore the Brāhmaṇas, with their minds being degraded, became incapable of receiving and comprehending the real import of the Vedas, and all the races, being contaminated by sin, became slow-witted like śūdras; this

is why the Purāṇas were composed for their easy comprehension). In this twenty-eighth Dvāpara-yuga of the seventh auspicious manvantara, called Vaivasvata, Vyāsa, the great sage is the son of Satyawati, he is my Guru, and the supreme among those who know the dharma. In the twenty-ninth Dvāpara, (that is, in the next Dvāpara-yuga) it will be the son of Droṇa who will receive the title Vyāsa. Up till now, the twenty-seven Vyāsas have left this world. They too had composed the Purāṇa-saṁhitās in earlier "yugas".

The sages said: O the illustrious Sūta! Tell us about Vyāsas, the composers of the Purāṇas, who appeared in the previous Dvāpara-yugas.

Sūta said: In the first Dvāpara-yuga, it was Brahmā Himself who appeared as the Vyāsa – the classifier of the Vedas; in the second Dvāpara, Prajāpati performed this act of "vyāsa" (that means "classification") ; Uśanā (Śukra) was the Vyāsa in the third Dvāpara. Vṛhaspati in the fourth, Sūrya in the fifth, Yama in the sixth, Indra in seventh, Vaśiṣṭha in the eighth, Sārasvata in the ninth, Tridhāmā in the tenth, Trivṛṣa in the eleventh, Bharadvāja in the twelfth, Antarīkṣa in the thirteenth, Dharma in the fourteenth, Trayyāruṇi in the fifteenth, Dhanañjaya in the sixteenth, Medhātithi in the seventeenth, Vratī in the eighteenth, Atri in the nineteenth, Gautama in the twentieth, Uttama (who is well known as Haryātmā) in the twenty-first, Vājaśrava Veṇa in the twenty-second; Soma, who belonged to the same family (as Veṇa) was Vyāsa in the twenty-third Dvāpara. Tṛṇavindu in the twenty-fourth, Bhārgava in the twenty-fifth, Śakti in the twenty-sixth, Jatukarṇya in the twenty-seventh and Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana in the twenty-eighth. I have mentioned to you about the twenty-eight Vyasas just as I have heard.³

³ The four yugas (ages), Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali together constitute a "Mahā-yuga". Just as a year (saṁvatsara) is made up of the six seasons which return every year over and over again, so does a Mahā-

yuga with its four yugas. Seventy-one Mahā-yugas make up the time-span called a "manvantara", and one thousand Mahā-yuga make a "kalpa"; each kalpa therefore comprises fourteen manvantaras. At the end of one kalpa comes "Mahā-pralaya", the "Great Dissolution", when the manifested Cosmos becomes merged in the Primordial Cause and remains in this (unmanifest) state for one full kalpa, after which occurs a fresh cosmic manifestation or Creation (as we call it). Thus one kalpa in the unmanifest state of Dissolution is followed by a fresh Creation which continues in existence till the next great Dissolution, after the same period of one kalpa; thus goes on this interminable cycle of "sṛṣṭi" (Creation) and "pralaya" (Dissolution).

Just as every year in summer Nature assumes the same and identical aspect, and a different aspect in winter, as in all previous winters, so in every Mahā-yuga, during the period (yuga) called the Satya-yuga, all natural objects and all living creatures, their minds as well as bodies, manifest a certain distinctive state. Just as at the close of winter from the manifestation of a particular condition in all living creatures, one can perceive the advent of Spring, from the appearance of a certain state characterizing all terrestrial objects, both living and inanimate, the ṛṣis knew the arrival of Satya-yuga. It is the same with the other three yugas which follow: Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. But though this year's winter resembles in many respects those of previous years, there are, in some minor aspects, differences as well; for instance, the mango tree in my house bore fruits this year almost at the same time as last year, and yet there have been slight divergences as well regarding the bearing of fruits and the leaves. In a similar manner, the broad features of living creatures and natural objects during the previous eras (like Dvāpara) in various Mahā-yugas in the past were very much like what they have been in the present Manvantara; and yet, minor divergences are also inevitably there between one yuga and another. It is not surprising therefore that the title of Vyāsa should belong to diverse persons in different Manvantaras.

One may wonder at this point though the recurrence of a year is easy to perceive for us, how, the life-span of man being as short as it is, it is at all possible to take note of the changing cycles of the yugas, let alone the much vaster cycles of Kalpas, Manvantaras and Mahā-yugas? We can say now, in reply to this only that knowledge of these vast periods of time, like the Mahā-yugas is not impossible for a yogin; great yogins in the past had in fact attained such knowledge, some yogins have done so and are doing so even in our times following in their great predecessors' footsteps. Let this suffice for the moment; we have discussed the matter at length in the later Quarters which deal with the range and the heights of knowledge of our great ṛṣis.

This is corroborated by similar passages from the Mahābhārata and other Purāṇas. In the present Manvantara, the title Veda-vyāsa belongs only to one person alone, and to no one else, namely, the great sage Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, the son of Satyawati. Veda-vyāsa means one who expands the Vedas by dividing these according to diverse branches. “vivvyāsa vedān yasmāt sa tasmād vyāsa iti smṛtaḥ” (As he classified the Vedas, he has been called Vyāsa – Mahābhārata, Ādiparvan (63.88).

In the present Manvantara, the Vedas were classified only once; “Vyāsa” therefore is one person. Nevertheless, even if the commentator of this Yoga-sūtra is not Maharshi Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana but some other “Vyāsa” belonging to some previous Manvantara, even that does not derogate from the authenticity of this “Bhāṣya” (commentary) ; whichever Vyāsa may have composed this Bhāṣya, it must be admitted to be in full accordance with the purport of the Vedas. Some scholars in modern times are, it is true, assuming the title of Vyāsa; but the commentary on the Yoga-sūtra by Vyāsa is very old. There is no evidence whatsoever that any scholar of ancient times assumed the title of Vyāsa. Nevertheless, if any other scholar, assuming the title of Vyāsa had written this marvelous commentary there is no reason why he should have concealed his name; there is no evidence of the practice of such concealment of one’s name in ancient times. This Bhāṣya is not a text belonging to any particular sect or school; there is therefore absolutely no reason to suppose that some person, assuming the title of Vyāsa, composed this text in order to propagate the view of a particular sect or community. Whoever is the author of this Bhāṣya, his work deserved to be widely acclaimed as a supreme masterpiece, there is no obvious reason why the name of the author should be kept hidden. Besides, by the quality of teaching set forth in this Bhāṣya of Yoga-sutra too, it is proved that Maharshi Veda-vyāsa himself is the author of it. For, it is all these teachings that Veda-vyāsa has expounded in the Mahābhārata and other sacred texts.

Here ends the First Quarter of the First Chapter titled “India is Holy Land”

OM TAT SAT

CHAPTER 1

QUARTER – II: Doubts

At this point the question may arise : “Why is it necessary after all to prove that the author of the commentary on the Yoga-sūtras is the great sage Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Veda-vyāsa”? Whoever may have been the author of this text what is necessary to know is what is written in the book; if it seems valid it certainly deserves to be accepted; if it turned out to be untenable whoever may happen to be its author, his conclusions are unacceptable. Such a doubt may arise not only in regard to the commentary but also the original sūtras themselves; and the present system of education being what it is such doubts are perpetually arising in the minds of young students regarding all other old texts like the Brahmasūtras and the Sāṃkhya-sūtras. Hence it is necessary to express our views regarding this matter briefly.

Among the books that are nowadays being written and published, except books on geography and similar subjects, all other books are written relying on the inference of the author. These inferences are based on one's own somewhat inadequate knowledge arising from sense-perception and similar knowledge of others. But the perceptual knowledge of ordinary people is vitiated, in the first place, by defects of the sense-organs in the body. If for instance the windows of a room are covered with green glass and sun rays passing through them enter the room, then to a person who is inside the room that

light will appear to him as green; similarly, according to the strength and quality of the gross sense organs, one's visual and auditory perceptions are coloured (affected). It is a phenomenon familiar to us all that when a person is affected by a certain eye-disease he sees all visible objects as yellow coloured. Some others, owing to another kind of trouble of the eye, see every object as two or three at the same moment. In some others the sense organ of hearing (ears) are so defective that they can hear no sound or hear only some kind of distorted sound. These no doubt are symptoms of distorted sense organs; but it clearly demonstrates that owing to defects in the bodily organs wide divergences in perception occur. But even among those whose sense organs like the eyes, for instance, have not been damaged as mentioned before—that even their perceptual knowledge is vitiated owing to congenital structural defect of the organs, a little close reflection will make clear. If standing in the middle of a straight and broad main road if one looks along the road before him it will seem that the two sides of the road get closer and closer till they meet at one point; but if one gradually proceeds along the road it becomes evident that it was only an optical illusion. The spot standing where one had directed one's vision as well as elsewhere along the road the distance between the two sides is the same ; but through the inherent defect of the eye as an optical instrument that the two sides of the road seemed to get closer and finally to meet, thus causing the illusion. Nevertheless, even when this error was later revealed as such, it is not that when one looks at that direction again the illusion is dispelled. That the visual organ of all human beings have a natural structural defect is therefore definitely known by this. I offer another illustration now. If a person who is standing on one end of a field gazes in the direction of a distant village it seems to him that the trees, walls and mansions in the village and other objects are all situated at an equal distance from him as if these natural objects like trees are painted on a canvas. However as that person comes nearer to the village, the more he comes to

have different visual perceptions regarding the forms of the trees and their distances from one another. Standing on the peak of a high mountain, if one gazes below, the trees and creepers, cattle, human beings and all others objects appear exceedingly small, and almost on the same level as the ground below. At an arid place in the midst of a desert, water is seen and so are trees at a barren spot—all these are long familiar phenomena; looking at the rainbow which seems to be visible where the earth meets the sky (apparently) at a little distance away, boy attempts to get at it so that he can have golden ear-rings. An adult does not, it is true, do this; but so far as the visual perception is concerned, there is no difference here; for the adult sees exactly what the boy does; the only difference is that the adult person knows that it is an illusion. Lying on the lap of its mother the child stretches out its hand to grasp the moon; its eyes no doubt are quite like our own; but it does not possess as we do a proper sense of distance, it must be admitted. It is not that only our visual sense organ (the eye) has such structural defects. If one examines the matters closely the same sort of defects are discovered in our other (sensory) organs. When my hand is hot the body of another when touched by it feels cool; on the other hand, if my hand is cool the body of the same person feels hot. When my tongue undergoes a certain condition whatever food I take tastes bitter; when the condition of my tongue changes I don't feel so. Even extremely sour mangoes taste sweet to a child; it ceases to taste so when he is grown up. To one person even food which is slightly saline tastes intolerably so; even something that is more saline may not seem so to another person. A person who strikes me as extremely beautiful today, may appear tomorrow, under a changed mental condition, ugly. The sound that seems very sweet today, may seem thoroughly unpleasant tomorrow; and yet we are all the time regarding it as nothing but sense perception. Under these circumstances how can one admit the kind of knowledge that we call "direct perception" is certain and infallible?

Secondly, after a little more reflection on this matter it will be evident that what we usually call direct perception is so only in one part, the other two parts being memory and inference. Seeing a quadruped object, for instance I say, "I have seen a cow." However, on close examination it is seen that when that quadruped object appears before me I first perceive its form through my sense channels; this is all that sense-perception does. When this occurs the memory of my previous experience makes me aware of the fact that I have in the past perceived other objects with similar features and qualities, and I have also come to know that this object is called by the name of "cow". This is the function of memory. Then my faculty of logical inference being called into play makes me arrive at the conclusion that the object with the form perceived by me at this moment is a cow. But owing to the fact that I cannot distinguish between these three—namely, sense-perception, memory and inference, on account of the dullness of my intellect, I say, "I have seen a cow". In this knowledge of mine that part of it which is constituted by my sense-perception may have been vitiated by defects in my physical organs; secondly, that part of my knowledge may not have been fully under my control owing to restlessness or sluggishness of my mind. That a sense-perception, as soon as, or even before, it is received in the mind and fixed, the mind being distracted by something else wanders in another direction — is a phenomenon known to us all; and further, that owing to the dullness of the mind the very notion of any sense-perception fails to arise in the mind is common knowledge. Moreover owing to restlessness and dullness of the mind our memory too having failed to be fully aroused may not have fully revealed the form of the object perceived before; and the kind of judgement in matters like sameness and difference—that too may not have functioned properly owing to the defects of the mind mentioned before. It is often heard, as a matter of fact that the same object may be

perceived differently by different persons at the same time. Mistaking a rope for a snake, hallucination in which, in darkness, a tree is mistaken for a human being—all these are well-known phenomena everywhere. The phenomenon of loss of one's sense of direction is known to all; the direction which I am calling the East you are seeing as the West. And yet so far as the visual organ is concerned there is no difference between you and me; the objects which you are seeing are the same as which I am seeing; but owing to differences regarding our past memories and present inferences what I am perceiving as the direction of the East, you are perceiving as its exact opposite, namely, the West. It must be admitted therefore that what we regard as direct perception cannot be wholly relied upon owing to defects in the sense-channel and differences in the relative proportion of the admixture of memory and inference with the original sense perception; besides, all are not capable of distinguishing the perceptual part of their experience from their memory and inferences.

Thirdly, a very small part of the world becomes objects of our direct perception. Inferences are based on what is perceived at one place or at one time. Nevertheless, with the increase in experience, deviations from previous perceptions are usually found out; hence our conclusions too keep changing all the time.

For all these reasons, therefore, the inferences that can be based on such erroneous and limited sense-perceptions and the theories based on them that appear in modern books cannot be accepted as certain, incontrovertible Truth. But the texts composed by the ṛṣis who were Brahmvādins are not of this kind; for until, through yogic power they attained infallible (abhrānta) knowledge of Brahman, ṛṣis were not recognized as such, and, consequently, did not occupy the place of enlightened masters (ācāryas). When by virtue

of samādhi they obtained supernatural and infallible vision and thus came to know the essential nature of all things in Creation — it was then, and only then, that receiving the title of “ācārya” they revealed to their disciples the “tattvas” (essential principles) according to their “adhikāra” (capacity and competence). Nevertheless there were many, no doubt, who, even without attaining the supreme knowledge (of Reality) devoted themselves to teaching; but there is a difference here between them and the modern teachers, it is this : They (those ancient spiritual teachers) taught only what they knew with absolute certainty, and as far as they knew; they never taught anything by imaginative speculation. However, it was only the Brahmavādin ṛṣis who have been called “āpta” (infallible and authoritative), and it is only their teachings that have been designated “āpta-vākya”. In the sacred texts of Hinduism it is these “āpta-vākyas” that are regarded everywhere as the highest and the most infallible authority. But owing to lack of direct acquaintance, in the minds of many in modern times doubts have arisen as to the excellence of the knowledge attained by the old ācāryas; so we are going to embark upon a more extensive discussion on this subject.

CHAPTER 1

QUARTER – III: Removal of Doubts and an Account of the Glories of ancient India

How are we to believe that the great ācārya ṛṣis were infallible —“āpta”? This question is apt to arise in the minds of many nowadays. In reply to this question what we would like to say is this: Just as remaining in Bengal, I implicitly believe that there is such a place as England though I have never seen it, so, for the same reason, I have to believe in the infallibility of the ancient sage teachers — ācārya ṛṣis. Some persons, who are inhabitants of England have announced to us that there is such a country as England, and some inhabitants of this country trusting their words and travelling along the path indicated by them have at last reached a country called England which corresponds to the description of the land given by Englishmen and disclosed it to us; and none of them after returning had said that the statements regarding the existence of England are not true. Whenever somebody goes to England testifies to the truth of this — the existence of England. Besides, from the manners and gestures, the conduct of persons who have returned from England it becomes evident that they had entered a human society that was different in many respects from our own. In particular, we know them ordinarily to be persons who will not gratuitously tell us lies in a matter such as this. Hence it is, that I believe in the existence of England, even though I have not seen it. The infallibility of the ācārya ṛṣis too is demonstrated by evidence of this kind. They were known at first in the society as truthful, self-controlled, world-renouncing and fundamentally good and descent people;

when they, after resorting to long and arduous "sādhana" (spiritual endeavour) became fulfilled in their object they proclaimed to the people at large their message regarding the spiritual state they had attained at the end of their sādhana; and they also told their disciples about the road they had followed before attaining that state; and believing these statements as true whoever and whenever proceeded along the road indicated by them, has testified to the truth of these revelations; nobody who had strictly followed the path indicated by them ever said on returning that their statements were false. Directly perceiving (knowing) the signs along the indicated road as far as he has travelled has demonstrated the truth of the teachings. Their activities, power (and so on) too differ widely from those of ordinary people. It is not that it is only in days long past that men following the prescribed paths attained results; even today many persons in this land by taking to the path indicated by the old masters are attaining fulfillment.⁴

Under the influence of the times people have become extremely lazy and self-conceited; hence they have no desire to enquire about persons who have won the title of ācārya or attained an advanced state of spiritual realization through sādhana; they do not even know that many such persons exist in this land (India) even today; they do not even make the necessary effort (to do so). Some have even questioned the very possibility of this by saying that they do not believe in the existence of such persons; for, if any such person existed—so they argue—he would certainly have appeared in public and demonstrated his power. To these objectors we can only say in reply that they are

⁴ In order to inspire faith in the subject taught and to encourage them in following it, the author of the Yogasūtras has at first prescribed certain easy and simple processes (sādhanas) by adopting which one can have direct experience of supra-sensory knowledge. These easy and simple (yogic) processes too have been prescribed in the Yogasūtras.

extremely unfortunate; for, notwithstanding the presence in our country of invaluable treasures they are being deprived of them owing only to indolence and arrogance. In the first place, it is necessary for them to know that the need is theirs; for those who have attained fulfillment have no need of their own to appear in society and deliver their message. Secondly, it is also necessary to know that the notions we have regarding what men should or should not do, do not apply to the great masters (ācāryas). It has been mentioned at many places in the Purāṇas that in accordance with the divine dispensation (law) like the change of seasons, when, after the termination of Dvāpara-yuga, Kali-yuga started, the gods and the ṛṣis, by the divine Will, concealed themselves from the human society. Nevertheless, even in these times persons who are specially interested in transcendental (parokṣa) truths occasionally receive their "darśana" (vision). Even when they, on rare occasions make their appearance in public, they so conceal themselves under various disguises that ordinary people overpowered by the influence of Kali-yuga cannot even know their true identity. Their conduct on this account is not culpable; for, the rules that govern the principles of action of men in bondage are not applicable to them. Those among us who believe in the existence of God, will be able to realize the truth of this statement easily. All religious denominations admit that God is omnipotent; if so, why then does He not alleviate the suffering and misery of the people? When, the moment He reveals His existence all atheism is dispelled, then why isn't He doing so? The reasons that can be ascribed to Him are wholly applicable to those ācārya ṛṣis who have attained Him, who have no wishes other than the divine will. However the present is a time which is comparatively propitious; hence, the gods and the ṛṣis have begun revealing themselves to some extent. At this propitious moment, those who will exert themselves unremittingly will be able, we believe, to receive their company that destroys all doubts; since among

those who are making such an effort are being fulfilled and blessed by their salutary company.

Nevertheless, against what has been said regarding the transcendental knowledge of the ācārya ṛṣis, it may be objected that the arguments that have been put forward to demonstrate the infallibility of the ācārya ṛṣis are not valid; for, the reason why even without visiting England I am believing in its existence is that the earth surface is not exhausted by that part of it which I have seen at first hand; that there exist many other countries besides it I can easily understand. Therefore there is nothing strange in the fact that there exists another country, namely, England beyond the region known to me directly; hence if somebody says that he had visited that country, there is no reason apparently to disbelieve him. But the kind of occult powers displayed by the ācārya ṛṣis of vision, audition and so on that have been mentioned in the śāstras contradict our natural perceptions. There cannot, therefore be any positive evidence in favour of them; they are therefore not credible. Such an argument has in recent times dominated the minds of many people; hence, what is heard about the supernatural powers of ācārya ṛṣis, considering these as altogether impossible for human beings, many persons desist from following their example, and therefore dismiss those who follow them as mental perverts and blind believers. As for this objection what we would like to say first is that the objectors are not aware of the full extent of the power that is inherent in every human being; and, indeed, they have not given much serious thought to it. Nobody ever even imagined that it would ever be possible for man to fly in the sky. The statement in the Ramāyaṇa that Śrī Rāmachandra had flown in the aerial chariot named Puṣpaka from Lankā to Ayodhyā, accompanied by thousands of warriors had been looked upon by many as a chimerical fantasy like The Arabian Nights. And yet this impossible event has

turned out to be a reality with the advance of the human intellect. With the increase in the knowledge of the power that is latent in matter the people of many countries now-a-days, which include even some Bengalis are flying in the sky by means of balloons or other flying machines. The scientists of Germany, England and France are in the process of making aeroplanes capable of flying from one country to another carrying thousands of soldiers and they do not think that building such aerial craft is an impossibility. I cannot, by my physical eyes, see by penetrating through this wall in front of me and see things within or outside it (this wall); but the modern men of science have now invented a machine by means of which even this impossible feat has become possible. By the use of electrical power path that used to take a year to traverse, has now become possible to cover in a day. With the help of the telescope even the distant lunar sphere has become largely visible; by the help of the microscopic particles of matter even subtler than atoms mentioned in modern Logic are becoming visible to our eyes. Thus, almost everyday, something that was thought to be impossible is being made possible. Therefore the extent and magnitude of knowledge of the ācārya ṛṣis that has been mentioned in the śāstras and described here in brief, it may seem to people in general to be impossible, it cannot be said that to attain such knowledge is altogether beyond the capacity of man.

However it can be objected at this point, though it is true that in the West, thanks to the extensive investigation into the energies in matter, many apparently impossible feats have become possible; but there is no available evidence that such advances in the physical sciences were made in India or elsewhere; and even if such an advance in knowledge had taken place in India in the past, there is no reason why it should have disappeared. Especially, Western savants with the help of various physical instruments have accomplished the marvels mentioned before; but in the descriptions of the various powers

of the ācārya ṛṣis there is nowhere any mention of the use of such physical instruments; on the other hand, they would see even without such instruments distant worlds and objects, and travelled to distant places at will and then disappear from there; the mention of such and other kinds of powers is found in the śāstras. But the existence of such powers are never witnessed in human beings; hence by the example of the advance in Western Science one cannot believe in the inconceivably great powers of the ṛṣis.

The reply to this objection is briefly given as follows. It must be admitted that at the present age the cultivation and development of the physical sciences have been greater in the West than in India. But from observing the present state of India it would be wrong to conclude that the condition of India was always like this. Historians have ascertained, after carrying on investigations that at one time in the past Egypt had attained a highly advanced state (of civilization); from there the light of knowledge radiated to Greece and thus enlightened the ancient Greece; later the Romans received this light from Greece, and through them this light (of knowledge) spread throughout the European Continent. From the state of present-day Egypt it becomes difficult to believe that they had achieved such a glorious state of civilization in the past. The same is the condition now of the Greeks and the Romans. The place which is now displaying its wealth and prosperity with an array of palaces, may very well be reduced into a desert a century later; hence, not even the slightest trace of its glory will survive. This is seen to be the law of the world everywhere. It is not even a hundred and fifty years since the people of India have come under the dominion of the West; the transformation that has taken place in India even during this brief period of time, if one only ponders this steadily it becomes clear that from the spectacle of the present state of India its condition in the past cannot be guessed fully.

At present, general notion of the Indian people is that sea voyage is contrary to their local custom and the sacred scriptures and that Indians never before travelled to distant lands sailing across the seas and coming to this country the English people has first shown to the Indians sea-faring ships and those who after receiving the English type of education have lost all faith in their own traditional religion—the same people are now boarding ships from the West and are travelling to various foreign countries. That ships ever existed in this country the present day Indians cannot even imagine. Fortunately however the means of knowing the state of this country immediately before its occupation by the British have not disappeared totally even today. Books dealing with the condition of India at that time are still extant and among the contemporary Englishmen some have described certain aspects of the prevailing state of the country in their own books and records of administration. From these it is known that at the beginning of the 19th century there existed in India many large ships; these were immeasurably superior to and more firmly built than the ships built in the West. Even after the introduction of British rule in this country, Indians carried on trade with distant countries like England in vessels made by themselves. A large number of ships equipped with cannons and other firearms adorned the Indian seacoasts. Recently, the history of India in the past has begun to be discussed; this is how these facts have come to light; otherwise no one among the present day Indians knew anything about them. The cloths that were made by the weavers of East Bengal were of so high quality that even Western people found it impossible to emulate, and some rare specimens that can be found even today still excite the marvel in Western Countries. Even a few years ago there was a wide spread notion in the minds of Indians that it was only because the Western people came here that Indians are able to wear cloths of diverse kinds to cover their bare bodies to preserve common decency and ward off inclemency of weather. That they ever possessed any capacity for anything—even this

seemed difficult to believe and even today such a notion has not been dispelled from the minds of many. And yet, before this country came under the dominion of the Western people this country was self-reliant; this is universally admitted. All the material wants of the Indian people were fulfilled by the things grown or made in India. The gorgeousness of their raiments and ornaments, the beauty of their great halls, the firmness and loveliness of their buildings had charmed the whole world even a hundred and fifty years ago. The beauty of architectural monuments like the Tajmahal has remained inimitable to the people of all other countries. The cannon made in this country during a period before British occupation which still exists in Bijapur has a diameter of 4 feet 8 inches; it is 15 feet long and weighs 1100 maunds (approximately 45 tonnes); a bigger cannon than this is hardly to be found even in the West. By countless other examples of this kind it becomes apparent, that immediately before the advent of the British the Indian people even though convulsed by political turmoils of various kinds were in no way inferior to the people of any other country in knowledge and intelligence, in artistic skill, in trade and commerce, wealth and so on; but if the articles and books written before these hundred and fifty years were lost for some reason or other there will be no means of knowing the state of India as it was a hundred and fifty years ago. If this be so, what the state of Indian people had been five thousand years ago is something that, to judge from the present state of India is considerably more difficult to ascertain. It has been related in our ancient history of the Aryas that fifty centuries ⁵ ago the kings and princes of India accompanied by their valiant

⁵ In India every year the astrologers prepare almanacs and at the beginning of the new year the villagers hear from them about the good and bad prospects of the year; from ancient times this process has come down to us through the centuries in this country. In these almanacs every year the counting of the era is done beginning from the coronation of King Yudhiṣṭhira —which is the year zero. There is little chance of error, therefore in this reckoning based on Yudhiṣṭhirābda (the era beginning from Yudhiṣṭhira). According to the almanacs of this country it is now 5011th year of Yudhiṣṭhirābda. Duryodhana was born under the

warriors assembled in the battle field of Kurukṣetra and striking one another had been exterminated and soon after at the holy ground of Prabhāsa the warriors of the clan of Yadu were locked in the battle and ended by rendering this land (of India) totally void of heroes. After this holocaust that exterminated the Kṣatriyas, the line of emperors ruling over the vast realm continued till the reign of Janamejaya, the son of Parīkṣit who was the son of Abhimanyu (the son of Arjuna). Then with the increase of the influence of Kali the kings declined in their valour and held their royal dominion only on small areas of land and by being involved in internecine hostilities wore themselves out. Thus when they kept suffering rapid decline in mutual clashes, hordes of cunning foreign marauders, who were growing in numbers under the influence of Time (kāla), started invading India and thus gradually looting and plundering all the treasures and wealth of India and later occupying it wholly, established full dominion over it. It is not merely that they were aliens, they also belonged to other religions; not only that — to wipe out the religion, religious texts and cultural achievements of the ancient Hindus was considered by many among them a compulsory and sacred act. Thus one alien ruler after another plunging vast regions of the earth in streams of blood filled the entire territory of India with widespread trouble and turmoil. Remaining thus in such disorder for a thousand years if the Indians turned their back to self-development and if their ancient feats and achievements were lost in oblivion—would it be a matter for surprise? Now, dispossessed of all wealth and treasures, this Indian land has become submerged in the mire of poverty; famines and

maleficent influence of Kali and other asuras (demons) too appeared assuming human bodies at the inception of Kaliyuga. From the analysis of astrological treatises also it is learnt that the Kaliyuga started even a little earlier from the time of Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira. It is mentioned in Rajataranginī that in the year 653 Yudhiṣṭhira was born. From several other evidences also it is known that the battle of Kurukṣetra took place 5000 years ago.

epidemics have made this country their permanent abode. The mental vigour of the Indian people has for various reasons dwindled almost to the point of extinction; the Brāhmaṇas are begging from door to door and treated with contempt; the landlords remain trembling with fear; trade and commerce have disappeared and the middle-class people are engaged in eking out a livelihood with clerical toil. The social order too has been largely destroyed and the Indian people are of late being educated in such a manner that they are even unable to believe that they had in the past anything glorious to their credit.⁶

But regarding the fact the Hindus of India achieved an incredibly high state of progress this is evidence enough that even after being afflicted by a series of disasters for more than a thousand years this race has not yet become extinct and in comparison with any other nation of the world has not suffered degradation in real humanity.

⁶ How the prosperous state of this country, mentioned earlier that prevailed at the beginning of British rule vanished during the period of foreign dominion is not relevant to the purpose of the present book. Many among us are now holding the view that the abuse of royal authority is the cause of this. There may be an element of truth in this conclusion; but if one examines the whole matter calmly it will become clear, that the abuse of royal power alone is not the cause of it; before the introduction of the British rule since as long ago as a thousand years, on account of being troubled by various (social and political) upheavals, their devotion to their own race and religion and sustained cultivation of knowledge declined and their strength of character and mental vigour were in a large measure lost. This too is one of the chief causes of our present decline. As a matter of fact had this principal cause not been there British rule in the first place could not have been established itself in this land. Besides, hostility of Fate also is a major factor. It is futile now to discuss in this context the evil effects of British rule. It will only promote vindictive tendencies. By this the present distress will not be removed; on the contrary, the state of unrest will only increase. In considering this matter it should also be remembered that now the phase of "Kali" (Kaliyuga) is in full swing; in this age a person who has attained great power and yet does not, in varying degrees abuse it for the sake of fancied mundane self interest is an extremely rare phenomenon in all countries.

However, though evidence of the past glory is not visible in present day India if one carefully notes what still exists it can be learnt with certainty that the advance Western men have achieved in the physical sciences, ancient Indians did not, even in this matter suffer by comparison in any respect.

First—it is universally acknowledged that the indication of the progress of the people of every nation is obtained, in a large measure, from an examination of their language. In proportion as knowledge advances language develops; for, without the help of language there can be no thought of any kind. To express one's thoughts one must do so through language which is intelligible to all. Development of thought is inevitable and language is generally the measure of progress in thought. Among the languages that are now current and known in the world the principal is Sanskrit. Western linguists, after comparing the different languages of the world have unanimously pronounced that Sanskrit is really superior to all other languages. No streams of thought have flown in the human mind until now that cannot be perfectly expressed in the Sanskrit language. The Sanskrit verb has such a wide range of meaning that no physical or mental affairs of man are beyond their powers of expression. Is there any more need to elaborate on the state of all round progress of a people whose language happens to be this "Devabhāṣā" (language of the gods)? The scientific manner in which the Sanskrit alphabet is constructed and fully developed cannot be seen in any other language. Does it not demonstrate the excellence of the Āryas of ancient India?

Secondly, as far as poetic power, descriptive capacity, knowledge of human nature are concerned the manner in which they are exemplified in books such as the Mahābhārata,

the Rāmāyana and Śrīmad Bhāgavata — have they any parallel in the literary works of any other nation? The range and variety of verse meters – “chandas” that are in the Sanskrit language—even these have nothing analogous anywhere else in the world. The ancient books of India are almost lost; those, which are still extant, have no parallel in the whole world. It is primarily the literary works of comparatively modern poets like Kālidāsa that are now holding the topmost positions in world literature. However, even if there is any doubt or dispute in the sphere of general literature, as regards the philosophical writings there is no room for any doubt. The Śrutis that have been widely current in India from old times are “apauruṣeya”—“not composed by human beings”; these therefore can have nothing comparable (to them). As for the Sāṃkhya Philosophy which deals with the creation, continued existence and dissolution of the Cosmos and the Brahmanidyā (knowledge of the nature of Reality) of Vedānta—have they any parallel elsewhere? Even in Europe and the land of America the excellence of the Brahmanidyā of India is being freely proclaimed. Is this not evidence enough of the high level of all-round development in ancient India? Is it credible that those whose mental vigour was so great were indifferent towards acquisition of knowledge regarding the nature of the phenomenal world? Generally speaking human beings try at first to master the world of matter; it is only later that their minds begin to turn inwards. The examples of Europe and America are evidence of this. It should here be borne in mind that unless the nature of the physical world is thoroughly known the nature of the Ātman cannot be known; this is why that the author of the Sāṃkhya Philosophy has explained in great detail the nature of the physical world. The Indians, therefore, were not indifferent even in acquiring knowledge about the phenomenal world.

Thirdly, music is another index of the progress of Man. The six rāgas, thirty-six rāgiṇīs and the various combinations of them producing countless others, which have been testifying to the mental development of India since very old times — have any melodies (rāgas and rāgiṇīs) superior to them appear in any other country of the world? Through the extensive cultivation of the science of sound that has recently been initiated in the West, some men of science have come to know that melodies have forms—that the rāgas and the rāgiṇīs are not formless (abstractions). In Eidophone Voice Figures by Margaret Wats Hughes the forms of many European melodies have been shown; these forms resemble those of corals, flowers and similar objects; but the ancient Indian Āryas had advanced so far in this science of sound that they could determine which among those melody forms are male, which female; which of them have which colour and shape; which look very young and which middle aged and old; which look angry and which calm; which appear smiling and which sad (and have classified them) into male and female; and they have also clearly revealed the forms of their various combinations; after determining the forms of melodies appropriate to the various feelings and emotions that usually arise in the hearts of men they, after discovering the most suitable sequence of notes have laid down the rules governing their applications. Indian music being music of a very high order, these melody-forms express themselves in divine and human figures representing various ideas.⁷

But this knowledge of music too is now all but lost; for the Indian people have long since been bereft of joy; is it to be wondered at that the cultivation of the art and science of music will diminish? Now we have the seven notes—ṣaḍaja, ṛṣabha, gāndhāra, madhyama, pañchama, dhaivata and niṣāda—and in three scales—udātta (high), anudātta (low) and svarita (middle) and using these notes “ghāṭṣ” (keys tuned to a

⁷ Some more specific details relating to this subject have been set forth in the last Chapter titled “Conclusion” (Upasamhāra)

particular note) are fixed on (stringed) musical instruments (like the vīṇā)—this is all the singers know and practice these in tune with the (musical) instruments. But as to the exact places of origin of these “grāmas” (notes) within the body singers who know the science of this have become scarce these days. If one in a thousand among them knows this, his knowledge is only something that is learnt by rote and not a matter of direct experience. The sustained exercises that are needed to experience them directly are almost lost at present in this land afflicted by calamities of all kinds. Nevertheless, even in this condition the knowledge of music that still exists in India has not been surpassed anywhere else. Is this not an incontrovertible proof of the ancient glory of the Indian people and the progress they achieved in particular in the science of sound?

Fourthly, what still remains of our ancient astronomy, astrology and palmistry (sāmudrika and mahāsāmudrika vidyā), no people of any other country have yet been able to attain. The astronomical observatory that exists in Benaras for the observation of heavenly bodies, though built in comparatively modern times, testifies to the fact that the Indian people were not inexperienced in building devices for the observation of heavenly bodies. The science of astronomy that exists in Europe today has always existed in India till now. Yet what has still survived of these sciences in India does not exist elsewhere. However regarding Indian astronomy it is generally objected that the Indians have shown their ignorance and superstitions by representing the Sun, the Moon and the planets as living beings or “Jīvas”. Yet a close examination of the matter reveals that, as a matter of fact, this belief does not betray their ignorance. On the other hand, it testifies to their immense knowledge. The physical bodies in the sky that act on the earth and living creatures on it, have been classified by the ancient Indian astronomers according to the nature of their actions.* The Indian people had come to know through their highly advanced scientific

knowledge that no object in this world is wholly unconscious. The entire universe is constituted by the combination of matter and consciousness. The great savant Śrī Jagadish Chandra Bose, through investigations conducted by him by adopting the method of scientific enquiry of Western men of science has demonstrated before all Western men of science that there is no reason to suppose that the statements of ancient Indian Ārya ṛṣis regarding this are false; on the contrary, they seem to be true. The Ārya ṛṣis, keeping in mind (noticing) the existence of consciousness within this planet of ours, called it (the earth) a Jīva. Thus, in their view, the Sun is a Jīva, and so is the Moon, so are the planets like Mars and stars like Aśvinī; indeed the entire sky is full of Jīvas. The heavenly bodies that are seen in the sky are the external bodies of the Jīvas that dwell in them. Human bodies too are made of inanimate matter; but as Jīva-consciousness remains infused in them they are called Jīvas. It is in accordance with the kind of activities a particular Jīva performs and its shape and nature that its name and species are determined. The ancient ṛṣis too, by observing the shapes and their respective powers of producing fruits (results) have characterized these material bodies in the sky as Jīvas. They have called some of these material bodies "grahas" (planets)— the grahas for instance like Āditya (the Sun) and eight others; some others they have designated the "Dik-pālas"— the ten Dik-pālas beginning with Indra; yet some others they have called "Vasus", — as for instance Bhava, Dhruva and so on; some other heavenly bodies they have called by the names of their indwelling Deities like the five "Devatās" (gods) beginning with Śiva; they have mentioned some of the heavenly bodies by the names of their indwelling law-giver ṛṣis, as for instance the ṛṣis like Marīci; on others yet they bestowed the appellation of nakṣatras (stars) — as for instance the star Aśvinī and others. Thus these Jīvas embodied in radiant heavenly bodies have been classified by the ṛṣis into gods, asuras (demons), rākṣasas (ogres) and yakṣas (a class of semi-divine beings). Just as there are innumerable Jīvas

inhabiting our planet, the earth, so, on all these innumerable radiant material bodies in the sky there live innumerable Jīvas. The general character of these Jīvas resembles that of the Jīva embodied in the radiant heavenly body which is their common abode. Knowing how the celestial Jīvas like the grahas (planets) act on all the Jīvas living on the earth, the ṛṣis, for the purpose of determining the actions and the fates of the Jīvas have revealed extremely simple rules symbolically expressed. The truth is that in their knowledge they had so completely mastered the laws governing the entire Universe that they have represented the entire manifested Cosmos as an "āmalaka" (myrabolan) placed in the palm of one's hand. Now the knowledge of all these things has disappeared. Nevertheless, the simple and easy general clues they had disclosed for ascertaining and calculating the births, acts and the fates of human beings with a little knowledge of the heavenly bodies have not yet been wholly lost. Here and there uneducated astrologers have preserved fragments of this knowledge for their livelihood and knowing the bare rudiments of arithmetic, the way in which persons belonging to this class are able even today to ascertain the births, acts and the fates of human beings—seeing this who can help being overwhelmed with wonder at the unbounded knowledge of the ancient Indian Āryas? It must be admitted however that the calculations of these astrologers do not in all cases tally with actual facts; nevertheless, in many cases too they do tally; this is inevitable. For these astrologers are usually extremely uneducated people; it is hardly an exaggeration to say that they know nothing about the heavenly bodies, and they can learn very few among the clues. The original texts on astrology are almost all now lost; of these, only a portion remains with one, another portion remains with another, yet another with a third person; thus they remain scattered in various places in a disorderly manner, and even he who possesses a certain part of it keeps it concealed; fearing that his business may suffer a loss he does not let others know it. Bhṛgusaṃhitā, for instance, is a very

authentic and old text of Indian Astrology; only a very small part of it has been collected and published after considerable effort; there is no trace of the rest of the book. Under these circumstances, it is hardly to be expected that the calculations of the present day astrologers should turn out right. And yet how even these uneducated astrologers can occasionally calculate correctly is being shown below as a case in point.

When I was seventeen years old my father had my horoscope prepared by astrologers. I was born in a village at a late hour of the night; there was no clock at that time in that village; so my father had given the astrologers my time of birth by guessing; they had prepared my horoscope by calculating accordingly. It is six years since one of my highly educated colleagues in the legal profession—who has made some study of Astrology—seeing my horoscope expressed the doubt that my time of birth had not been correctly recorded in that horoscope, hence the sign of the zodiac ascendant at the time of birth (lagna) had been ascertained wrongly; for the lagna, at the time of birth had been incorrect; had that been correct, the course of my life and my nature that he knew would have been different. So, after consulting me, he showed my horoscope to Nārāyaṇ Jyotirbhuṣaṇ, one of the leading astrologers of Calcutta at that time. After studying it for several days he said that there were some error of calculation in the horoscope; the “lagna” had not been correctly determined; the correct “lagna” should be “Kumbha” (Aquarius) and not “mīṇa” (Pisces) as indicated in the horoscope. Incidentally, he is not a typical professional strologer, a Brāhmaṇa having a highly respectable lineage. After my lawyer friend having discussed the matter with him, his doubts regarding the correctness of the horoscope increased; he said however that his doubts were not dispelled even by this. There is another person, Śaśī Ācārya by name who has some acquaintance with palmistry (sāmudrika śāstra); he runs his business at Bahubazar in Calcutta where he

stays; he has ascertained—as my friend knew from experience —the “lagna” at the time of birth in a very extraordinary manner by only seeing the palm; so he wanted to have my palm examined by him to my residence in Calcutta. I had heard about this Śaśī Ācārya a long ago and had my palm examined by him about 14 years ago; at that time however he could not ascertain my moment of birth by seeing my palm; he could not tell me correctly even the year in which I was born. Therefore, I had not done any more astrological calculations done by him. So when my friend requested me to have my palm examined by Śaśī Ācārya I related to him that incident. At this he said that there may occur a mistake once in calculation, but that he could ascertain the lagna of birth by looking at the palm he had witnessed with his own eyes in many cases; besides, during all these years his calculating power may have improved. At my friend's request I agreed to bring him to my residence and he arrived there at the appointed hour; I recognized him as Śaśī Ācārya whom I had seen before. Then as my friend asked him to ascertain my birth by reading my palm I told him that he had examined my palm a long time ago, but he could not then ascertain my time of birth. He was a practical man of business, so he was disinclined at first to admit it and started to give an account of his calculating feats; but I assured him that I knew him well and recognized him; I stayed before at another house; there I brought him and showed him my palm; he could not then ascertain my time of birth. It was then that the astrologer paused to reflect for a moment and asked whether my wife was there and whether she had a horoscope. A year ago I had prepared a horoscope of my wife at my village, three hundred miles away from here (Calcutta) and she had the horoscope with her; it was not shown to any person in Calcutta; even my above-mentioned friend had not seen it before. My wife was then in Calcutta; so I told him that she was there and her horoscope too was there. Śaśī Ācārya then said that he would try to ascertain my wife's time of birth by reading my palm; if he succeeded in that attempt then and only then he

would calculate my time of birth; for I had declared that he had been unsuccessful in his calculations concerning myself; for this reason he supposed that there might have been something exceptional in the lines of my palm. I eagerly consented to his proposal. Then after reading the palm of my right hand steadily for a couple of minutes he made a few simple arithmetical calculations—mainly addition and subtraction and ascertaining the year, the month, the date, the day of the week and the moment of my wife's birth, he drew the horoscope at the time of my wife's birth; then he asked me to bring my wife's horoscope and compare it with that thus prepared by him and see whether the two tallied with each other. Comparing it with my wife's horoscope I found that her year, month, date, day of the week, moment of birth and the horoscope itself—all these were correctly and exactly ascertained. I was greatly astonished at this. Considerably encouraged, the astrologer too started to put down on paper certain figures and made a few arithmetical calculations to ascertain my time of birth; but unfortunately he could not even ascertain correctly my year of birth; somewhat embarrassed, he then pressed my palm repeatedly and said that the skin of my palm is very thick and after pressing it a line seems to be hidden under it; supposing the line to be there he would once more like to make some (arithmetical) calculations; if the year of birth tallied he would make further calculations; otherwise, my purpose would not be served. Saying this he once again put down figures on the paper and made calculations, and shortly after ascertained the year of my birth. I found it to be entirely correct. Then, encouraged by this, he ascertained the month, the day of the lunar fortnight (tithi), the day of the week correctly and exactly and finally, ascertaining my time of birth decided that the lagna at my time of birth as written in the horoscope was wrong.

The knowledge by which the ṛṣis had discovered such general clues which enable even such uneducated person to make such marvelous calculations—how profound that knowledge was is amply demonstrated by this one example. The knowledge by virtue of which the exact time of birth, not only mine but also of the person who had become my wife, can be ascertained by reading my palm—can there remain any doubt that such knowledge had not only made the entire Cosmos its subject but also established mastery over it. Only this one example has been mentioned here. In the lives of many people we may find such other instances that testify to the validity of this and by means of the astrological science called “Mahāsāmudrika Vidyā” (the science by which one’s horoscope may be determined by the lines of one’s palm) the fortune tellers, even today, performing even more extraordinary and marvelous calculations in this degraded India of ours. From the small part of Bhṛgusaṁhitā that is now extant it is seen that all conceivable combinations of the signs of the Zodiac that may be found among human beings are recorded there. Whatever of these sciences of astrology, palmistry and Mahāsāmudrika Vidyā still survives constitutes an irrefutable proof of the glory of ancient India. No other nation has yet been able to achieve this.

The science of Astrology, (the knowledge of radiant spheres and other material bodies in the sky), “sāmudrika” (Palmistry) and Mahāsāmudrika Vidyā that have been introduced now in western countries is quite insignificant in comparison with even the present knowledge of India regarding them. That various effects are produced on human bodies according to specific days of the lunar fortnight (tithi) is perhaps known to the majority of Indians; but in the west it is as yet unknown even to men of science and scholars. However, the sphere of radiant bodies centering around the poll-star (Dhruva), the Great Bear (Saptarṣi Maṇḍala) and other celestial realms traversing the sky as constituent

elements of the Great Circle called Śiśumāra and again; the entire Śiśumāra cakra (circle) comprising the Dhruvamaṇḍala is orbiting around even higher celestial spheres – only a small fraction of this knowledge has still now been the subject of human knowledge in the West, and in this ill-fated country, owing to lack of cultivation, this ancient knowledge is totally lost. The statements of the ṛṣis regarding these matters appear now as unintelligible conundrums. Astrology, Palmistry and Mahāsāmudrika vidyā, have recently begun to be introduced little by little in the West; so, English—educated Indians are now beginning to suspect that these sciences may not, after all, be frauds perpetuated by illiterate Indian fortune-tellers; and yet until recently all these were regarded by them as hoax. In course of time this land of India which was once the abode of the ṛṣis has now fallen into such a dismal condition that it has become for them (the English-educated modern Indians) difficult to believe that the Indians had anything to glory in, in ancient times.

Fifthly, the science of chemistry, the power of making and regulating mechanical contrivances and the physical sciences of heat and electricity are now more developed in the West; nevertheless, even after the lapse of such a long period of degradation, observing the relics that survive, as products of these ancient sciences, can it be said that the ancient Indian Āryas had been in the sphere of these branches of knowledge were inferior to the modern Western men of science? Their universally acknowledged exalted state of mind militates against this notion. The ancient Indian chemical processes have now been reduced to the means of livelihood of unscientific rapacious practitioners of medicine. Nevertheless, even though fallen in such a state of degradation, the products of these half-educated people have still remained inimitable in many countries elsewhere in the world. "Makaradhvaja" is a life-enhancing drug containing mercury; it is prepared by uneducated Ayurvedic physicians of this country; in the countries of the west also it is

prepared for medicinal purposes. But Western medical practitioners who have examined Makaradhvaja prepared in this country have unanimously declared that the therapeutic efficacy of Makaradhvaja made in this country is much greater than the Makaradhvaja made in Western countries.

As for "lauhabhasma" (iron-ash), it is not prepared nowadays following the process laid down in the śāstras, iron ash prepared from a thousand heatings in the fire is not available now; yet the lauhabhasma prepared even today by only imperfectly following the indigenous method have a medicinal efficacy that is a thousand times greater than the iron ash made in the west. None of our latter-day Ayurvedic physicians knows how to prepare mercury ash with the help only of plants; it is only very rarely that a sādhu or a sannyāsin prepares it. There has been no knowledge of this as yet in the West. Recipes for the preparation of medicines by mixing more than a hundred ingredients are mentioned in the ancient Ārya medical treatises and the relative proportions of these ingredients are also mentioned; of these many are at present not available at all; besides, the present day money-grabbing physicians do not even make any attempts to collect them. They prepare their medicines with those substances which they can easily procure and thus carry on their medical profession; however even then, the results of their medical treatment are in no way inferior compared to the therapeutic effects of the Western medical men; rather the medical treatment by our indigenous Ayurvedic physicians is found to be, in many cases more effective. The reputation with which the physicians are following the traditional Hindu methods of therapy even in this city of Calcutta and running their own professional

activities constitute ample proof of this. Is this not ample evidence of the excellence of the ancient Āryas in the science of Chemistry and medicine? ⁸

There stands an iron pillar in Delhi from very ancient times; it is cylindrical in shape; its total length is 60ft, and its height above the surface is 30 ft; its diameter is 16 inches; it is built of cast iron. It existed previously in Mathura from where it had been brought to Delhi some 800 years ago where it was installed; according to tradition it was contemporaneous with the battle of Kurukṣetra. Thousands of years elapsed, sun and rain have continuously acted on it; and yet at no point on its surface has there grown any rust. No western country has yet been able to prepare such pure iron by means of their chemical science; the iron prepared by them cannot endure for so long a period without being rusted. On the other hand if one comes to think about the kind and amount of huge machines that must have been needed to construct this single pillar one must admit that the capacity of ancient Indians to construct large machines was in no way inferior to that of the Western people and if one reflects, further, on their ability to manipulate physical forces it becomes indisputably established that even in these matters the modern Western people have not been able to surpass it in any way. ⁹ That this pillar belongs to the Hindu period is universally acknowledged.

⁸ Recently Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ray has written a book on the Chemistry of ancient India; in this book he has convincingly demonstrated that the science of chemistry was cultivated extensively in ancient India.

⁹ The noted chemist Roscoe in his treatise on chemistry in 1880 Vol. II, Chapter II, p. 35 writes thus about this iron pillar, "Wrought iron pillar, no less than 60 feet in length. This pillar stands about 30 feet out of the ground and has an ornamental cap bearing an inscription in Sanskrit belonging to the 4th century. It is not an easy operation at the present day to forge such a mass with our largest rolls and steam hammers" & c.

The wonderful temple of Lord Jagannātha at the holy place of Puri still exists that remains unrivalled for its artistic skill and excellence of execution. Besides, the huge blocks of stone that have been set at great heights in the body of the temple and the very large metal disc that has been fixed on the top, the "Mechanical Power" that is needed to raise them (blocks of stone and metal disc) at such heights and set them in their proper places—reflecting on all these matters learned Western visitors warmly praised the builders of the temple. Sometime ago a block of stone from a high place of the temple was loosened and fell down; but it has not been possible as yet to replace it at its original spot.

Evidence of the fact that the science of electricity had been mastered by ancient Indian savants has not yet disappeared completely. The wonderful tridents or circular plates made of iron that are seen on the top of temples, provide an incontestable proof of the ancient Indian science of electricity. As soon as clouds charged with high volt electricity come close to them, electric currents flow out of these metal plates and neutralise the electricity of the clouds. Hence it is that the news of any such temple being struck by a thunderbolt is never heard. These iron plates are known by the names of vajra (thunderbolt), cakra (disc) and triśūla (trident). There is the custom prevalent in our country of fixing these vajras, on the top of temples and mansions, and so, it ought to be done—this is all the Indian people know today. The actual science that lies behind it they have completely forgotten. Now, after the advent of the Occidental people the hidden meaning of this custom is coming to light. (Thus even out of the great mischief of subjection to foreign rule many good things are being done through God's grace. The attention of all other nations has begun to be attracted by the science of the ancient Indian Āryas and the signs of regeneration of the glory of ancient India are being manifested

now.) The renowned physician, the late Sītānāth Ghosh — who is the pioneer in this country in making an electrical instrument with a view to treating patients, speaking about of this practice in our country of fixing metal structures like the trident on the top of temples wrote in an article published in the journal, "Tattvabodhinī" in November, 1873 (?)

It is laid down in the śāstras that tridents are to be placed on the top of temples of gods and discs (cakras) on the top of temples of goddesses. Both these are to be made of copper, iron or brass with tapering ends. Those who, after discussing our śāstras have been able to know the hidden intention of their authors will certainly admit that this method they have prescribed has a special object. As we ponder the matter of the European practice of fixing of iron rods at the corners of mansions in order to prevent thunderbolts, we realize that our authors of the śāstras too have recommended the system of fixing copper or iron tridents or discs for the same purpose. Physicists have ascertained by experiments that in the clouds above positive (male) and negative (female) electricity always exist freely. It is this free electricity that we all see moving about in the sky. During spring and summer the air usually remains dry; at these times as the small clouds that gather in the sky they develop free electricity which, accumulating, often rush into adjacent clouds and become thus neutralized. But if at that time there is no cloud nearby or if the cloud happens to be of the same nature, that electricity flows into some object on the earth's surface. Whether it is another cloud or the earth into which it flows— before falling (flowing) that free electricity in the cloud by separating the neutralized electricity (into positive and negative) attracts the opposite kind and repels the similar kind of electricity. After this separation, owing to the fact that dry air is a non-conductor of electric current, the free electricity and the opposite kind which it attracts gradually increase and tend to

combine with each other. Not that the electricity (positive or negative) of the same kind does not increase in the same manner. At this time of the two electric forces about to combine one rushes out to meet the other and becomes neutralized.

If a cloud as described here appears in the sky above a temple (or a mansion), then, under the influence of the negative force of the free electricity within it — in the normal state of equilibrium of the temple the two electric forces being separated — the opposite electric power in the free electricity (of the cloud) is attracted towards the disc or trident above the temple and the similar force in it passes into the earth below. After such separation owing to the intervention of the dry air the electricity of the sky and that attracted by the points of the trident gradually increase. At this time the end points of the trident being conductive and finer than the lower surface of the cloud before the latter can descend, the electricity of the temple starting from the end points of the trident easily goes up and combines with the electricity above. The electricity in the cloud having thus attained the state of equilibrium there is no possibility of any danger. The end points of a trident are excellent conductors; so as soon as electricity, no matter how small in amount, accumulates it goes to the clouds above, this is why no lightning is seen nor thunder heard.

The long iron rods that the Europeans fix on tops of big mansions do not have a greater electrically neutralizing power than tridents or discs. Perhaps many will be surprised to hear that the effectiveness of the lightning-conductors in the West is not superior to that of the trident or the disc. But there is no reason for feeling surprised at this; for the lightning conductor and the temple with the trident fixed on its top are very much alike, since the latter too is a kind of lightning conductor. Therefore the electricity of the earth flowing with

equal force through both has the same effectiveness. If anybody disbelieves it let him observe the temples of our country, be they old or new; if they do so they will find that just as the mansions of Europe which are successfully protected from thunderbolts by the lightening conductors, so too our temples fitted with tridents (or discs) at the tops are never destroyed by thunderbolts. This fact of having accomplished the same feat as that of the huge lightning conductor at a small expense shows the refinement of knowledge of the Śāstrakāras. There is another sphere in which the clarity of their knowledge is exemplified. Western men of science used to think at the initial stage of the study of electricity, that the electricity in the cloud flows into the lightning conductor leaving other places and being thus carried inside the earth there is no chance of disaster. Guided by this theory they, without placing these rods in contact with the building, implanted them in dry blocks of wood (because they are non-conductors) placing them at some distance. But modern Western men of science have determined through various experiments that instead of the electricity from the clouds falling on the lightning conductor it is the electricity from the earth that flowing out of the tip of the conductor combines with the electricity from the clouds. In accordance with this theory they now do not hesitate, in many places not only to place them in contact with the building but also to fix them by piercing them through a part of it. That this refined knowledge of the Europeans was grown long ago in the field of knowledge of our Śāstrakāras is clearly proved by the fact that they did not at all shrink from urging to fix lightning preventing contrivances like the trident on the top of temples.

That our old sages knew the technique of preventing lightning-stroke by metal rods is testified by another evidence which still exists.¹⁰ In the Eastern regions of our country a large part of the crop is destroyed by hailstorms. To prevent this calamity a person is appointed at the earnest entreaty of the villagers; he is called a "shilari" (one who prevents hailstorms).

During the summer, for three or four months, he does not shave or smear oil before bath and spends his days through strictly observing rules for purity. When hail-clouds are seen in the sky the "shilāri", loosening the bond of his hair and putting a big vermillion mark on his forehead, and holding in the right hand a long iron trident and slinging on his left shoulder a bugle made of buffalo-horn rushes out of his home naked and playing on the bugle runs towards the cornfields. Arriving there and proceeding towards that part of the field above which the hail-clouds are seen, he stops and fixes the trident there and until the clouds disperse in all directions he keeps standing there playing on the bugle. If those clouds, instead of scattering, float away, borne by the wind towards another region, the "shilāri" chases it at great speed and arriving at the spot where the clouds make a pause fixes the trident there. If the clouds are not driven out from the sky above the field by this procedure performed by the "shilāri" often the hail-throwing power of the clouds is destroyed. By thus toiling throughout the summer for the preservation of the crops the small amount of corn that he gets, constitutes his remuneration. There is absolutely no doubt regarding the reality of this phenomenon; for everyone who has a special knowledge of the affairs of our villages is probably aware of it.

¹⁰ In course of time during the last 37/38 years that elapsed since the publication of this article even this evidence has become scarce.

It is necessary now to examine the effectiveness of the ways in which the "shilāri" prevents the occurrence of the hailstorm. European savants have determined that when, owing to the presence of free electricity in the clouds, extreme coldness is generated and the water vapour is condensed into ice and falls on the earth as hailstones. To neutralize this electricity (in the clouds) the trident of the "shilari" is the only effective means. If the trident (triśūla) is struck in the field just below the hail-cloud, opposite electricity from the earth arises and issues from the end-points of the trident and flows upwards. Combining with the electricity in the cloud, it brings it to a state of equilibrium; hence, hailstones cannot be formed in the clouds.¹¹

The author of the present article (Dr. Sitanath Ghosh) had published another article on the knowledge of the Ārya ṛṣis about electricity in the January issue of the same journal where he had explained the effect of electric force in the practice of assuming "māduli" (small metallic—usually copper—hollow cylinders)—"It is a long time since an old Sanskrit text entitled Śilpa-saṁhitā has been discovered during an investigation in the Asiatic Society, in it there are references to such mechanisms as "Puṣpaka ratha" or "Dhūma-yantra" (aeroplane), "Toya-yantra" or "Tāpamāna-yantra" (thermometer), "Dūrabīkṣaṇa-yantra" (telescope) and "Dikdarśana-yantra" (Compass). If, through good luck any treatise on the science of electricity is found, then the little that we have set forth on the subject of electricity, many more such things may be found in it that will astonish all."

¹¹ The "shilāri's" observance of rules of purity and so on that have been mentioned above — these too have their scientific reasons. By these observances the will-power is considerably increased and on account of this a special power is generated for the production of the electric effect. When Dr. Sitanath Ghosh had written this article European men of science had not yet started investigation into this matter. Now even this has started.

Every Indian knows that "Vidyut" (lightning) is the weapon of Indra, the king of gods. Indians of all ages—old, young boys and girls —know that the flash of lightning in the clouds of the sky is the thunderbolt – "Vajra" – of Indra. According to old tradition, Śrīman Naradeva Arjuna, by using these electrical weapons of Indra had, at the time of the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest, had defeated Indra and at the great battle of Kurukṣetra was able to kill on the same day thousands of warriors fitted with armours made of iron. But now that this electrical device of Indra has become a thing of the past, these exploits of Arjuna have been airily dismissed as a wild fancy like episodes from the Arabian Nights. Other great warriors also like Bhiṣma, Droṇa, Karṇa and Aśvatthāman were adepts in the handling of these divine weapons. The science of electricity was so thoroughly mastered by ancient Indians that, in all their activities and movements—in eating, travelling, seating, walking, lying and sleeping—everywhere they were observant of the actions of electricity. They fully knew the laws that govern the physical body; so what sort of electric forces will flow in what particular posture of the body; what kind of electric forces again, operate during a particular manner of placing the foot; placing the head in which direction while lying in bed increases the flow of electricity in the body and thus disturbs sleep and generates illness; facing which direction, while one is seated, the flow of electricity can be slowed down to promote steadiness of the mind and assists in bhajana—knowing all these matters the Ārya ṛṣis had determined the nature of the processes involved in the conduct of our day to day lives. The science of all this has now become lost; it only survives in some places as long prevalent mechanical practices. Hence it is regarded as a superstition in our newly educated society. Let us take an example: A householder for instance should not lie in bed with his head towards the North; for a yogī for whom it is wholly desirable to conquer sleep and sluggishness, there is no

harm in lying with head pointing to the North. This is all we know about the matter. If anybody follows this rule he is regarded by the English educated people as superstitious; because the followers of this custom are not aware of its real significance. Thanks to the influence of Western Science it is now coming to light that the earth is a vast electric machine; of which the two focuses (centres) lie in the North and the South. Just as a clean iron bar if placed in contact with a magnet for sometime, takes on the qualities of a magnet, so if the iron bar is kept lying North-South for a long period it induces electricity with great force in the magnetic iron. Like the iron bar the human body also can quickly receive electric energy. Hence, in the Northern hemisphere, the head of a person lying in bed is nearer to the North Pole; it is obvious to our reason. If the electric current is thus induced it is easily intelligible that the head of the person who is asleep will be violently agitated. Hence, the person who lies in bed with his head pointing North must suffer from disturbance of sound sleep and after waking up he feels physically depressed. Regarding this Dr. Sitanath Ghosh, who has been quoted above, has revealed some more specific facts in the same journal in an article published (Tattvabodhini) in the same year. He writes, "If the huge magnet that is our earth is divided by a middle line into two halves - North and South it is seen that we (the Indians) live at a great distance to the North of this line. When the Northern hemisphere is affected by the characteristics of the North Pole of the magnet and the Southern hemisphere is affected by the characteristics of the South Pole of the magnet and when our feet are in touch with the Northern hemisphere throughout the day they are affected by the characteristics of the magnetic Pole and our heads by those of the North Pole. In the countries situated in the Northern hemisphere if one lies with one's head to the South the magnetic forces during the day are preserved and increased in the body while if one lies with the head to the North they are altered and

destroyed. Thus the magnetism of the body being repeatedly altered and destroyed every day and night erodes one's health and therefore gradually one's life-span too.

The same learned Dr. Sītānāth Ghosh in another article of his which appeared in the same journal in January 1872 (?) where, regarding the rule for lying with one's head set to the East and against lying with one's head to the West that is found in the Hindu śāstras, he gives the following explanation :

"It has been demonstrated by the marvellous experiments conducted by the great physicist Faraday that, on the surface of the earth beneath our feet a current of electricity is in constant flow. This electricity has been discovered to be produced by the heat from the sun's rays. The earth is spherical and it is rotating round its axis from West to East. Hence, the earth's surface is not heated by the Sun's rays at the same time successively from East to West. At the time when a certain portion of the earth gets hot, the regions to the West of it are comparatively cooler; this is the reason why the electricity that is generated by the heat of the Sun's rays is constantly flowing in accordance with the law explained before, from the East to the West.

Those physiologists who are trying to cure diseases of the human body by applying electricity have, by dividing the flow of electricity in the body into two kinds, ascertained the effects of each. The current that flows from the nerve centre towards the endpoints of the nerve branches, that is, from the brain to the toes or the spinal column laterally towards the thoracic region, and the lower parts (of the trunk) they call, the descending current. This (descending) current is normal for the body. In those parts of the body where this current is applied the blood vessels of those parts expand and thus the fluids of the

body (like blood) can flow more easily. So there cannot be any inflammation in those parts of the body due to obstruction of the flow of the fluids like blood. And the current of electricity that flows from the end points of the branches towards the centre or from the toes towards the brain or from the thoracic region or from the lower parts and the abdomen towards the spinal column, they call the ascending current. This kind of flow (of electric current) is abnormal for the body. In those parts of the body to which this kind of ascending flow is induced the blood (and other) vessels being contracted, a great deal of disturbance occurs in the flow of these bodily fluids; hence, in that part of the body owing to obstruction of fluids like blood, various kinds of inflammation may occur (see page 9 of Dr. J.R. Reynold's Lectures on the clinical uses of Electricity, 1871)

Now if you closely study the subject under discussion you will easily perceive that the authors of the śāstras of our country were extraordinarily conversant with the science of electricity as they were in other branches of knowledge. Everybody who will have taken note of the truths discovered through experiments in the science of electricity mentioned so far will admit that while lying in bed if one keeps the head pointing to the East of our planet rather than to the West, our body, especially our brain may attain a healthy state; because on account of the electric current that is constantly flowing on the earth's surface from the East to the West, lying with head to the East will induce in the body the descending flow while lying with head to the West will induce its opposite — ascending flow of electric current. Accordingly, lying with the head Westward causes the blood (and other fluids) to accumulate at the head and other parts of the body leading to inflammation and thus produces diseases related to it."

The Śāstrakāras of our country have said that lying with head towards the East leads to knowledge while lying with head pointing to the West makes the mind prone to troubles and worries; as to the validity of this perhaps nobody will have any doubts. It has been already pointed out that for a person who lies with head to the East the head (and other parts of the body) remains always clear and healthy and for one who lies with head to the West, these parts of the body tend to be filled with an excess of blood and other fluids causing inflammation and consequently, disease. If the head (brain) and all other parts of the body remain healthy why should there be any hindrance to knowledge, and if, on the contrary, they become filled with an excessive accumulation of fluids and hence get inflamed, what should prevent the mind from being disturbed? We must therefore admit unreservedly that the injunctions of the śāstras regarding lying and sleeping are entirely rational and beneficial."

The truth is that this body of ours is a kind of electrical device built with great skill. The nails of our fingers are the points of outlet, so to speak, of this electrical contrivance which is our body and the two eyes are like large windows for the outflow of electricity. Knowing this and knowing also that the actions of electrical energy are different for different human bodies the Ārya ṛṣis of old have laid down various rules and restrictions to prevent the evil effects of sight and touch by the nails (of our fingers). For those who will cultivate "Brahmavidyā" (knowledge of Reality), various rules have been laid down to protect their bodies from the inflow of outward-turning electrical forces. While eating, he should do so in a secluded place, outside the view of others, especially those of an inferior nature, and during the period of "Brahmacarya" (holy living) remain outside the range of sight of śūdras and others;¹² that is, persons who have an inferior nature; they should not take

¹² It will be shown later on that division into "castes" was based on congenital qualities (guṇa)

food touched by persons of an inferior nature or unknown birth and ancestry, since at their touch, the electric forces flowing out of their bodies infuse the food touched by them with their characteristic qualities. During copulation the electric forces of the male and female bodies are aroused in a violent convulsion and flow into each other. Hence, a man with superior qualities and consequently endowed with a superior electrical energy should not have sexual intercourse with a woman of an inferior nature and a woman with superior qualities should not have sexual intercourse with a man of an inferior nature. It has been stated in "Smṛti Śāstras" (sacred texts dealing with rules of conduct and social norms) that if a Brāhmaṇa takes food cooked by a śūdra twenty four times he lapses from his Brāhmaṇa status; but if he has sexual congress with a śūdrā (śūdra woman) only once he loses his caste. Nevertheless, although it is true that in the act of copulation the electricity of the sexually united male and female flows into one another, yet, the male (electrical) energy is infused into the female body more than the female energy into the male body; for the woman is the container or recipient of male energy. This is why the ṛṣis have laid down that a woman of a superior order (nature) should not be united in marriage with a man of an inferior order (nature). On the other hand, a man endowed with a superior force of character may accept in marriage an inferior woman; for receiving his force his wife will become better and by virtue of his power of penance (tapas) he will be able to nullify the deleterious effects of co-habiting with an inferior woman. But nevertheless, even for him this is not commendable. In ancient India men belonging to the higher castes had to cultivate the habit of acquiring spiritual power in a large measure by exercising self-control; hence, in those times the ṛṣis, in some cases, had approved "anuloma" (a male of higher caste marrying a female of lower caste) marriage. Not only that if anybody died without an issue injunction is found in the śāstras approving of producing an offspring by the union of a male of the higher caste and the widow of the

dead person. It was by following this prescription that the great Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana ṛṣi preserved the line of Bharata by engendering an offspring in the wife of the diseased king Vicitravīryas. Vasiṣṭha ṛṣi, by generating a son in the wife of Saudāsarāja increased the Sun dynasty. Now, the age of Kali has set in; people have become averse to tapasyā (practice of austerities) and the acquisition of knowledge; and in matters of conduct like copulation, exceedingly licentious, unscientific and dissolute. Foreseeing with their knowledge-eye that this state of degradation was inevitable the ṛṣis had forbidden in the Kali yuga "anuloma" marriage between different castes and generation of offspring by appointment. All this is science ; and does not spring from superstition or selfishness. Having lost scientific knowledge we have forgotten the essential principles of all our prescribed rules of conduct. Therefore we view everything as superstition and regard self-willed caprice and eating and moving about at one's sweet will as the highest mark of civilization. We do not even wish to admit there is any connection between one's way of life (habits of food and movement, for instance) on the one hand and the development of human nature and religion on the other and if any person wishes to observe rules according to old custom we look down upon him as superstitious. Those on the other hand who, in their daily conduct of life follow ancient methods, they too being ignorant of the science that is involved in the matter, their code of conduct is founded only on traditional preconceptions. Is it to be wondered at then that we should thus be deluded? And yet, if one considers these matters with a calm mind it is only the unbounded knowledge of the ancient Āryas that is revealed.

Insanity for instance is primarily a mental aberration; when I take a gross substance, which is called a medicine, this mental aberration disappears. Again, lust is a mental propensity; by the intake of a certain substance (medicine) this propensity is abated; the



eating of some other substances (like alcohol, meat and onions) this propensity is intensified. We are witnessing all the time thousands of similar examples. It can therefore be known, after a little reflection, that there is a close relation between the food one takes and one's nature and temperament. This is why the kind of food one takes has to be determined and prescribed according to the kind of character (nature) one intends to develop. He who aspires after the attainment of Brahma vidyā by becoming serene, with full control over the senses must abstain from taking exciting substances as food. He who, on the other hand, wishes to become dexterous in fighting battles by being zealous and vigorous, will have to take food that increases vigour and zeal. Hence it is extremely necessary to prescribe foods of different kinds for people of diverse avocations.

By Judging the inherent powers of substances the ṛṣis too have determined the proper kinds of food for people of diverse mental types according to (various) times and places. Does it be taken as their sound knowledge of science or does it betray their irrational superstition? Seeing that such fine discriminations have not yet been in evidence in the West and considering Western science as the best we turn skeptical regarding the injunctions of the Āryas about food. Indeed, on calmly pondering these matters one can know that even the knowledge of the physical sciences of the ancient Āryas of India was much greater than that of today. The Western scientists of today have ascertained that silk and wool resist the flow of electricity; hence, they are regarded as non-conductors. The ṛṣis too had for this reason, recommended the use of woolen or silken clothes during bhajana (meditation); for, it is necessary to stop not only the inflow of external electric forces into the body but also the wasteful outflow of the tranquil electric forces that are generated within the body by mental concentration. At that time, āsanās (seats) made of "kuśa" grass, deer skin and wool have been prescribed. Seating, during these times, on

bare earth or a metal surface has been forbidden; for the earth and metals are highly conductive while things like āsanās made of kuśa grass are resistant to electric current. The spot where the sādḥaka stayed and practiced Brahmavidyā being charged with a pure and holy electric current holds sacred (spiritual) forces ; this is why such a place has turned into a place of pilgrimage for the jīvas¹³. In fact, the places and objects that have been touched by the Mahātmās, those places and those objects have been, on that account, sanctified ; for the sanctification of others therefore such places and objects are extremely salutary and adorable. All this is science; there is nothing superstitious in it. Thus the more one reflects on the prescriptions of the Āryas on rules of behaviour and conduct the more one realizes that all their injunctions are based on boundless scientific knowledge.¹⁴

¹³ This is not the place for entering into a detailed discussion of Smṛti Śāstra (Sacred texts dealing with codes of conduct). So I refrain from an extensive discussion of them; what has been done above is just a cursory of the subject. Only a few general aspects of the matter have been touched upon only to show that there is a science underlying the Smṛti Śāstra and that it is not to be rejected outright as a product of superstition.

¹⁴ To generate belief in the fact that the characteristic energy of a man flows into the objects that are situated close to them. I am quoting below the account of an incident related in a book written by the renowned scientist, prof. A. R Wallace:

"The case of Jacques Aymar, whose powers were imputed by himself and others to the divining rod, but which were evidently personal, is one of the best attested on record and one which indisputably proves the possession by him of a new sense in some degree resembling that of many clairvoyants. Mr. Baring Gould, in his *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* gives a full account of the case with a reference to the original authorities. These are Mr. Chauvin, a doctor of medicine, who was an eye-witness who publishes his narrative; the Sieur Panthot, Dean of the College of Medicine at Lyons; and the Process-verbal of the Procureur du Roi. The facts of the case are briefly as follows. On the 6th of July, 1692, a wine-seller and his

wife were murdered and the bodies found in their cellar in Lyons, their money having been carried off. A bloody hedging bill was found by the side of the bodies, but no trace of the murderers was discovered. The officers of justice were completely at fault, when they were told of a man named Jacques Aymar, who four years before, had discovered a thief at Grenoble, who was quite unsuspected of the crime. The man was sent for and taken to the cellar, where his divining rod became violently agitated and his pulse rose as though he was in a fever. He then went out of the house and walked along the streets like a hound following a scent. He crossed the court of the Archbishop's palace and down to the gate of the Rhone when, it being night, the quest was relinquished. The next day, accompanied by three officers, he followed the track down the bank of the river to a gardener's cottage. He had declared that so far he had followed three murderers, but here two only entered the cottage, where he declared they had seated themselves at a table and had drunk wine from a particular bottle. The owner declared positively no one had been there; but Aymar on testing each individual in the house found two children who had been in contact with the murderers and these reluctantly confessed that on Sunday morning when they were alone, two men had suddenly entered and had seated themselves and taken wine from the very bottle which had been pointed out. He then followed them down the river and discovered the places where they slept and the particular chairs or the benches they had used. After a time he reached the military camp of Sablon, and ultimately reached Beaucaire where the murderers had parted company, but he traced one of them into the prison, and among fourteen or fifteen prisoners pointed out a hunchback (who had only been an hour in the prison) as the murderer. He protested his innocence, but on being taken back along the road was recognized in every house where Aymar had previously traced him. This so confounded him that he confessed and was ultimately executed for the murder.

During the process of this wonderful experiment which occupied several days, Aymar was subjected to other tests by the Procurator General. The hedging bill, with which the murder was committed with three others exactly like it, were secretly buried in different places in the garden. The diviner was then brought in; and his rod indicated where the blood stained weapon was buried but showed no movement over the others. Again they were all exhumed and reentered, and the Comptroller of the Province himself bandaged Aymar's eyes and led him into the garden, with the same result. The two other murderers were afterwards traced, but they had escaped out of France. Pierre Gornier, physician of the Medical College of Montpellier, has also given an account of various tests to which Aymar was subjected by himself, the Lieutenant General, and two other gentlemen to detect imposture; but they failed to discover a trace of deception; and he traced the course

That atoms of matter are indestructible and so have existed for endless time was what Western men of science had believed until recently; it is only very recently that owing to an advance in the science of electricity in particular and of physical sciences in general Western scientists have come to know that these atoms of matter, both solid and liquid, are produced by collisions between even more subtle particles of energy. And yet many thousands of years ago the great ancient Ārya ṛṣi Bhagavān Kapiladeva had revealed that these atoms of solid, liquid and fire substances originate from much subtler atoms of "marut". This word "marut" should not be taken to mean what we call air (vāyu); in this vāyu, atoms of solid matters, liquids and fire are mingled with those of subtle "marut". As a matter of fact, from the combination of these four the air we know has been formed. The

of a man who had robbed the Lieutenant General some months before, pointing out the exact side of a bed on which he had slept with another man." (Miracles and Modern Spiritualism by Professor A. R. Wallace, pp. 56 to 58, Edition of 1875)

(Continued 16)

It may be seen from the above account that energy was transmitted from the body of the murderers to the path along which they escaped, the benches on which they seated themselves, the bed on which they slept, the bottle from which they had took wine and the children they came in contact with. Despite all their effort the police could not trace them. Even after so many days since the incident took place, Aymar, through his supernatural powers, was able to capture the thieves by identifying the marks they had left behind along their route of escape. The human body is actually a receptacle of the powers that constitute his nature. It is therefore obvious that during a particular action, each and every object that is involved with the process will receive a part of that characteristic energy of the doer. It is true that we do not normally perceive such kind of things. But due to that reason alone it is not right to dismiss such things as impossible. It has been observed that an electrical device responds differently to a letter written by a woman and another letter written by a man. It has been confirmed now that the characteristic energy of every human being is being transmitted to the objects they come in contact with.

ṛṣis of old found that all things in this world are mixed substances; only, in that substance, the one among the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and space or ether) predominates, lends its name to that substance.¹⁵

The subtle "marut" that Bhagavān Kapila mentions from which the subtle, invisible atoms of solids, liquids and fire have originated, has as its characteristic power only tactual sensation and mobility, and this is the reason why it can impinge on the subtle senses of the jīva ; it is from this impact that our subtle perception of touch arises. Hence it is that Bhagavān Kapiladeva has described this marut as a substance which, as an object of human knowledge, is endowed with tactual power. On an examination of natural characteristics of substances, electrical energy is recognized as the "marut-tattva" as mentioned by Kapila. The ṛṣis have affirmed however, that even this subtle electrical energy or marut is subject to the cosmic reality of origination and destruction. Kapiladeva has mentioned a substance which is even more subtle than this marut - "ākāśa" which is the origin of this marut (tattva). The secret of this pure and unmixed ākāśa tattva has not

¹⁵ What we call "air" consists, in the main, of subtle, unmixed air atoms, this is why it is called air (vāyu). The ṛṣis have said however that this mixed substance, air, dividing itself into seven parts has pervaded the different worlds. These different kinds of air are called, (respectively)— āvaha, pravaha, anuvaha, samvaha, vivaha, parāvaha and parivaha. The air above the surface of the earth extending over a space of 12 "yojanas" (a little more than 100 miles); above it lies a layer consisting of relatively pure and radiant sphere of air called "pravaha", this is what Western scientists call "ether". The layer of air that pervades the realms above is called "anuvaha" and so on. The knowledge of these higher spheres of subtle air has not yet penetrated into the domain of Western science. It is by mastering the ethereal sphere of "pravaha" that some among rājarṣis (sage kings) of old could, as has been related in the Purānas and elsewhere, journeyed to other worlds ; but with the extinction of ancient Indian science it sounds incredible today.

yet been revealed in the Occident. It is impossible therefore to reveal the nature of this tattva (Cosmic Principle) by making it intelligible to the common man by adopting the methods of Western science. It is through the yoga of samādhi that the Indian yogis had known the characteristics of the pure "ākāśa" ("the Void" as a Cosmic principle). They have stated that this subtle Cosmic Principle of ākāśa is perceptible by the jīva only as pure "Sound" (śabda). The ṛṣis have affirmed that the nature of this pure Sound is anāhata – not generated through physical contact of two substances.

The ṛṣis have distinguished "śabdatanmātra" (sound as the subtle Cosmic element), the source of "ākāśa-tattva", from the ordinary sound that we hear. All sounds that we know through perception are produced by beating or striking of some kind or other. Within the auditory organ in our gross body called the ear there is a skin covering called tympanum (ear-drum); when struck by the air it vibrates; and, usually, our subtle (internal) auditory organ is activated; Nevertheless, when the external auditory organ (ear) is destroyed or is out of order, the subtle auditory organ which is independent of the (gross) body is not destroyed or damaged; it is this subtle auditory organ that is able to make the invisible ākāśa-tattva its object which, in its essence, is pure sound and thus perceive it (know it). Nevertheless, Bhagavān Kapiladeva has ascertained that there is an even subtler Cosmic Principle called "ahaṁ-tattva" (the sense of "I-ness") which is the source of this subtle element śabda (sound) and the subtle sense-organs. This ahaṁ-tattva, the great ṛṣis tell us, is derived (originates) from an even higher Cosmic Principle called "Mahat". However, this is not the proper place for embarking upon a detailed discussion of these specific matters; these will be discussed in detail when we come to deal with Brahmavidyā. We can say this much in conclusion at this point that in the principal religious scripture of the Christians, the Bible, one gets a faint suggestion of this pure anāhata śabda. That this great religious founder and Saint, Jesus Christ had come in contact with exalted spiritual

personalities and saints of India is being proved by recent historical evidence. Whether it was on account of this or on account of the probable fact that Jesus had come to know something of the knowledge of yoga acquired from yogis of Asia Minor region who had been from an earlier age acquainted with it from yogis of India,¹⁶ in the Bible, there is a reference to the pure subtle sound as the ultimate source of this visible phenomenal world. The Bible says, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." The sound (word) that is mentioned here is not the sound which is produced by striking or beating. This pure ākāśa-tattva, which is perceived by the soul (jīvātman) as anāhata śabda and which lies at the beginning of Creation — that sound is indeed the ultimate material cause of the phenomenal universe and which seems to be the subject of the statement of Bible quoted above. The ancient Ārya ṛṣis too have described it as the Primal "Śabda-Brahman" (Brahman as sound) which is the Source of this visible world. There is no reason therefore to doubt that the Ārya ṛṣis knew everything about the science of this entire phenomenal universe. Though the knowledge of modern Western men of science is immense, compared to that of the Ārya ṛṣis it is only child's play.

Sixthly, in trade and commerce, in artistic skill and craftsmanship — all matters which professionally belonged to the "Vaiśyas" the ancient Indians were in no way inferior (to the modern West). Even as far as the Ṛk Veda there is mention of ocean-going ships and of sea voyages undertaken by men aspiring after money and wealth and in the Manu-saṁhitā, rules have been laid down regarding the customs duties to be levied on sea-

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Evidence in abundance is now available regarding the fact that Indian thought and philosophy had spread to countries as far as Asia Minor; there is also abundant evidence now to prove that the Egyptians had received their high level of (scientific) knowledge from the Indians in ancient times.

going vessels.¹⁷ From this it is clearly known that ancient Indians were adepts in travelling on the seas. It is learnt from Sāyana's commentary on Ṛk Veda 1.116 that Bhujya, the son of Tugra had conquered an island arriving there on a sailing vessel. The old Indian texts are mostly lost now. It is very difficult now therefore to get accounts of journeys on the seas from Indian texts ; however historical accounts of other countries in the past two to three thousand years back are now available ; from these accounts it is clearly established that Indian ships carrying merchandise sailed to distant ports of Asia and Europe. Western scholars have now indisputably ascertained that ancient Indians had set up colonies in the island of Java in the pacific ocean ; it has also been revealed in old Western books that Hindu colonies had been established in the island of Shokatra. It has been mentioned in ancient Roman history that two thousand years ago a mercantile ship had sunk in the sea in the North-West of Europe; a few young Indians who were on board the ship had managed to escape and were first brought to Germany and then finally to Rome.¹⁸ Egypt, in the North of Africa, was a special field for Indian trade and commerce in ancient times. In some places of Europe medals with Sanskrit inscriptions on them have been obtained ; from this it can be definitely concluded that Indians used to frequent those places. Recently a highly respectable Japanese gentleman had come to Calcutta as a traveller; he has disclosed that an old image of goddess Kali has been discovered in Japan. Not only that; on the other side of the pacific ocean in the country called Peru in South America it has been revealed that from ancient times enactment of the story of 'Rāma and Sita' has been held every year and the kings of that region have, for centuries, identified

¹⁷ Refer Ṛk Veda : 3.8.55.6, 5.6.88, 1.8.116.4 and the commentary by Sāyana, 1.48.3, 1.56 and 2nd Aṣṭaka; also refer Manu-saṁhitā ślokaś 8.406, 8.408 & 8.409.

¹⁸ The celebrated Roman historian Plini has mentioned this incident in his 'Natural History' Book II, Chapt.67

themselves as belonging to the Sun dynasty; it has also come to light that images of the god Ganeśa are worshipped there and old stone images of Lord Buddha have also been discovered there. There is evidence in abundance to show that long before the European adventurer Columbus had arrived there Buddhist preachers had visited this land. The names of many places of this region appear to have been derived from Sanskrit words; as for instance, the name "Guatemala" can be inferred to be a derivative of "Gautamālaya" (the abode of Gautama, the Buddha). The inference is therefore obvious that ancient Indians had crossed the Pacific Ocean in their journeys to and from the American Continent and they had probably, set up colonies there too. Sir William Jones, the renowned President of the Asiatic Society, after having mentioned the evidence, among others, of holding festivals centering round the story of "Rāma and Sita" in the South American country called Peru had concluded towards the end of the 18th century that probably the same race had settled in India and in the American Continent (Asiatic Researches. Vol. I, Third Discourse, P 426). There is no reason to doubt, however that Śrī Rāmachandra was born in the region of Ayodhya in India and that the regions associated with his memorable feats like Daṇḍakāraṇya still exist in India. Particularly, from the fact that old images of the Buddha have been found in the American Continent it can be affirmed that people from Asia used to frequent the American Continent. Some ancient writers like the Greek historian Strabo have mentioned that Indian battle-ships sailed on the seas even in those days ; gems and precious stones of many kinds, gold, silver, woolen and silken garments of high quality, various spices like cinnamon, perfumes like sandal wood — all these things were exported from India to regions like Europe in ancient times. In foreign books dealing with ancient history including the Bible, it has been stated that articles exported from India were received avidly by foreigners across the seas. There is no reason therefore to doubt that ancient Indians excelled in trade and commerce.

The dresses for royal personages, their architectural skill in building large royal halls, their splendid seats, carpets and decorations — all these objects which demand considerable artistic skill that have been described in the Mahābhārata still remain unsurpassed in any other country. The royal hall made of (transparent) rock-crystal described in the Mahābhārata in which king Duryodhana mistook water for solid ground and hard floor for water, and seeing which he was completely bewildered— has such a royal hall being ever described in any other country? The temples of Ellora carved out of stone (on a hill) still remain unrivalled by any other people of the world. That rock-crystal was used in building palaces in India, is indisputable. There is no valid reason, therefore, to disbelieve the accounts given (concerning this matter) in the Mahābhārata.

Seventhly, from common customs and norms of conduct, systems of law and jurisprudence, one can get a good idea of the state of development of various countries. The ambience of holiness and the atmosphere of sanctity and charm of the Indian people in Tretā yuga, that has been described by Bhagavān Vālmīki in the Rāmāyaṇa — can anything comparable to this, let alone superior, be witnessed at present in any other country of the world in regard to excellence in the norms of social manners and customs? The state of society that has been described as prevailing even at the beginning of Kali-yuga is unparalleled elsewhere. In the Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad it has been related that a discourse on subjects treated in the śāstras had been held at the royal hall of king Karāla who belonged to the great dynasty of Janaka among scholars who specialized in the theory and practice of yajñas (ritual sacrifices); in this discourse the nature of Brahman, the jīva (the individual soul) and jagat (world) — all these formed the topics of discussion. In this august assembly of great scholars, a maiden belonging to brāhmaṇa caste and the

famous line of the sage Garga discussed scientific concepts that are so subtle and difficult as to make us all marvel in astonishment. The all-round excellence of a country where woman - even thousands of year before the battle of "Kurukṣetra" became so highly advanced in knowledge — is it necessary to establish it by any other evidence? The Brahnavidyā (knowledge of Reality) revealed in the Upaniṣads which has remained incomprehensible up till now even to eminent scholars of all other countries— that Brahnavidyā, as the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad itself states, Bhagavān Yājñavalka ṛṣi taught his wife Maitreyī thoroughly. Receiving this extremely subtle and recondite Brahnavidyā from her husband revealed in that Upaniṣad, she grasped it completely. Kapiladeva had imparted the entire Sāṃkhya philosophy to his mother Devahuti, and she too grasped it fully and thus, finally, attained the supreme state (of liberation). The Sāṃkhya philosophy, it is true, has become widely known ; yet, how many persons are there who are capable of grasping in full this knowledge of Sāṃkhya? And yet, in ancient times, even women in India were able to comprehend it thoroughly. Is more evidence needed to demonstrate the ancient glory of this land?

The excellent state of law and order that the ruling kṣatriya kings had established for the sound governance of the land passes our comprehension, in this polluted present society of ours. Kings justified their existence by looking after their subjects. Hence, they thoroughly knew the laws of politics. The politics of this land was based on a philosophy of life. The rules of law and jurisprudence that were current in this land have been mentioned incidentally in scriptures dealing with ethical norms of social conduct like Manusmṛitī and in historical texts like the Mahābhārata. The political philosophers of the West, comparing the norms that prevailed in this country with those of other countries, have

freely admitted that the people of no other country has been able to surpass the ancient Indians in the excellence of their rules of law and jurisprudence.

If one, after reading the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, casts a glance at ancient Indian society it appears, in comparison with our present-day society, like heaven itself. At one place there are seen holy men firmly dedicated to a life of strict asceticism who, after receiving Brahmagyā and concentrating their minds on the Supreme Brahman, sitting still like the flame of a lamp in a windless place, spreading blissful serenity in all directions ; at some other place, Brāhmaṇas surrounded by thousands of disciples are filling the air with the chanting of melodious hymns from the Sāmaveda; at yet another place one can catch a glimpse of a large audience hall adorned with pillars with engravings with gold and silver and thrones glittering with gems and royal personages clad in gorgeous and precious dresses and adorned with crowns studded with glittering gems and jewels and ministers engaged in grave deliberations are dignifying the place by their majestic presence ; again at another place Brāhmaṇas sages are seeing seated in sacred yogic postures are discussing the nature of this phenomenal world (jagat), the individual soul (jīva) and the ultimate Reality; and then one can notice the spectacle of warriors training themselves in archery of various kinds and the wielding of various other weapons as well and also training others in the use of them; turning one's gaze elsewhere one can see warriors on chariots and on elephants, cavalry and infantrymen vying with one another and exhibiting their special martial skills and spectators gazing at them with admiration ; there can be seen again merchants clad in beautiful dresses are trying to attract the hearts of customers by displaying (for sale) gems, jewels, corals, gold and silver ornaments, a variety of clothes, perfumes and cosmetics and various delicious articles of food. Then, again, at another place farmers can be seen competently arranging and

looking after matters concerning agriculture with royal officials ; artisans and craftsmen are seen making progress in the arts and crafts in which they exercise the expertise they had inherited from their ancestors; well-dressed servants and maids can be seen engaged in the service of their masters ; women, clad in beautiful dresses and covered with various ornaments are a source of delight to the society ; boys are devoted to their father, mother and the Guru and are assiduous in acquiring the knowledge appropriate and natural for their respective social castes (jāti) ; the women are distinguished by a fine moral and religious sense, inclined to the practice of austerities, free from indolence, full of dexterity in all household duties and true associates of their husbands in religion ; the society at large is well-regulated and disciplined in the exercise of moral and religious rules of conduct ; families are the abode of holiness, love and peace; depredations by thieves and robbers, lying and hypocrisy are extremely rare ; kings are earnestly sedulous in chastising the wicked ; the main object of his life is to promote the religion and prosperity of their subjects. This, then, is the ideal of ancient Indian society. The cities abound in multistoried buildings ; the main roads are broad and pleasant and occasionally sprinkled with fragrant water; the forts are constructed and protected with immense skill; the gardens filled with various charming objects, are like the windows of these cities; the villages are full of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, skilful artisans, craftsmen and peasants, maids and servants, and every one of them is self-reliant; the village chiefs and the village guardians are perpetually engaged in rural amelioration and development; the fields are teeming with corns ; the large tanks, ponds and wells are filled with clean and tasteful water ; guests are everywhere welcomed and lovingly entertained. This is the spectacle of ancient India that has been vividly delineated in old and authentic texts like the Mahābhārata.

Even under the rule of king Duryodhana, who is said to be an incarnation of lord Kali, the common people lived in such a state of happiness and prosperity. The ṛṣis who were the custodians and controllers of such social systems, who were the teachers of Brahnavidyā, astravidyā (the technique of warfare and the wielding of arms and weapons), Āyurveda (the science of medicine and therapeutics), Rājanīti (politics), Vyavahāranīti (Law) and the process of trade and industry, by virtue of whose foresight and omniscient wisdom India had become such a supremely happy and prosperous land and an abode of virtuous and exalted souls, under whose dispensation India had come to be acknowledged as a progenitor of virtual gems among mankind, on account of whose grace the foreign historians had known India to be a land abounding in gold and silver—does the consummate knowledge of those ṛṣis of old need to be established by further evidence? If you dismiss the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa as chimerical and fanciful like the Arabian Nights, then of course this special proof in support of their pre-eminence in knowledge and wisdom becomes untenable. Nevertheless, it is hardly credible that those who could visualize in their imagination such an ideal of human society made no attempt at all to achieve this idea in the actual world of facts. It does not at all seem probable that the manner in which the Mahābhārata is composed that such books are merely imaginary and that as such they present us with only a fanciful picture in striking contrast to the actual state of the contemporary society. From time immemorial the people of India have believed that the account given in these books is true to facts. I would like to add finally, that the very fact that even after thousands of years of anarchy and social turmoil the inward peace and order of the people belonging to the Indian society have not been wholly destroyed testifies to the inestimable excellence of the ancient Indian Ārya “samāja” (society). Such a degree of all-round excellence has not as yet been witnessed in any other society of the world.

CONCLUSION

Finally, what we would like to affirm is that though sādhakas endowed with supernatural powers usually remain hidden and thus keep their sādhana a secret, they have, nevertheless, been accidentally revealed sometimes even at the present age, and then, perceiving their supernatural powers all have marvelled. During the reign of (Mahārāja) Ranjit Singh there lived a sādhu named Haridas who had been subjected to various tests by European officials. He would remain in a state of "samādhi" (deep ecstasy) for a very long period of time, withdrawing his senses from external objects and holding his breath. In the journal Tattvabodhinī (in March-April, 1847) published by the "Brāhma Samāj" an account of him (sadhu Haridas) had been given as follows :

In Punjab, the royal domain of Mahārāja Ranjit Singh, a certain yogī was seen who could remain under the earth as long as he pleased. General Benchra, a Frenchman who, suspecting the yogī (of being an imposter) placed him under the earth to test him, and along with another European official captain Wed was present at the time of the yogī's emergence from under the earth. The following is a brief account of this incident : One day, that yogi, at the bidding of Ranjit Singh, appeared before him and excepting the ears, the nostrils and mouth sealed all the other orifices of the body with wax and entering a jute sack, and turning round the tongue (inwards) became like one asleep. Then the name of Ranjit Singh was imprinted on the sack ; then his (Ranjit Singh's) men placing it in a big chest locked it and laying that chest under the earth sowed barley seeds on the earth surface above it. A security guard was posted there to keep watch. The yogī remained underground for ten months. Meanwhile, Ranjit Singh, to fully rid himself of all doubts,

twice permitted the spot to be dug up and on both the occasions found him unconscious in the same manner. At the end of ten months, when he was lifted up, he appeared to be completely lifeless. His whole body was cold only the crown of his head felt very hot. Then his tongue was first pulled and brought into the normal state, he was then bathed in warm water. Within two hours he became as fit as before. During the period he was kept under the earth his nails and hairs stopped growing. He has revealed that while lying under the earth he remained plunged in supreme delight.¹⁹

In the jamindari domain in the Sundurbans belonging to the big jamindars (land owners) of Bhūkailasa, a place near Calcutta, a yogi was discovered inside an earthen mound in 1833. A report on him was published in the Tattvabodhinī journal in 1846 (?) in which it was stated that "he remained all the time unconscious of external surroundings; to break his state of yogic trance Dr. Graham held beneath his nostrils strong ammonia gas; but even this did not disturb his trance ; only a tremor occurred in his body."

Recently, about half a mile away from the northern end of Calcutta, a yogi has been staying in the garden house of Śrī Hareram Goenka; he remains in a state of samādhi for 15 days at a stretch. His hairs and beard remain in the same state (without growth) when he emerges from this state of samadhi as they were before it started; there is absolutely no difference. In the pioneer and some other daily newspapers in English it was reported that in the Kumbhamela (congregation of sadhus and sannyasins) there came many Mahātmās (holy men) endowed with great occult powers; these papers have stated that such holy men possessing great yogic powers have of late been noticed even by a large number of Western people in various places of India. And yet the states of these saintly

yogīs cannot be explained by modern Western science. There is no reason therefore to feel any doubt regarding the supernatural powers of ancient ṛṣis. Taking into account the boundless knowledge of these ṛṣis of old in all subjects, if any apparent drawback is discernible in any matter dealt with by them, we should think that we have not been able properly to grasp what they really meant to convey ; we should not, on that account, proceed readily to criticize them.

Chapter-4

There is another reason for being skeptical about the all-embracing knowledge of the Ārya ṛṣis that arises in the minds of many in the present age. They say that for the system of division into castes that has been prevalent in India must be approved by the ṛṣis and in the śāstras written by them there is ample justification for this custom; in every text of Smṛtis (scriptures dealing with social customs and norms) the Brāhmaṇas have been described as the best of all and all others — kings, subjects, the rich and the poor have

been directed to bow their heads before the Brāhmaṇas ; if, for instance, you are to make gifts (dāna) you must offer them to the Brāhmaṇas; the lame and the disabled may get at most some food, but it is the Brāhmaṇa who really deserve gifts and offerings. Thus in many places of the Smṛti -śāstras many rules have been laid down which favour the Brāhmaṇas. The authors of these Smṛti texts are usually Brāhmaṇas; it must be said therefore that they have laid down these rules selfishly to promote the interests of their own caste. Even among those who belong to the other castes there are many who are seen to excel the Brāhmaṇas in knowledge, intelligence and other qualities; hence, this "caste system" has no scientific basis of any kind; what lies at the root of it all is only selfishness. Owing to the existence of this caste system there cannot be any unity established in India, and this (lack of unity) is one of the chief causes of the present decline of India. So the ṛṣis who have introduced this pernicious system of caste division — how can they be acknowledged as all-seeing and infallible?

Regarding this our contention is that the caste division of India does not actually spring from selfishness. Looking at the state in which this division of caste prevails at present many, no doubt, may think that it is the self-centeredness of the Brāhmaṇas that has produced this system. Nevertheless, a careful consideration of the matter will show that actually there is no reason to suppose that this is so. All the śāstras declare that the Brāhmaṇas are the best and the highest in society; abundant evidence to the effect that they deserve to be respected and served by people belonging to the other castes — is true. But this high esteem towards the Brāhmaṇas has not been enjoined on account of the worldly prosperity they enjoyed. The Brāhmaṇas, the śāstras declare, should never be rich, for their principal activity is "tapasyā" (practice of ascetic austerities); they should never save money, except in period of crisis; they should never resort to trade and

commerce (as their vocation) ; they should never become kings and rule us ; they should never engage in the business of warfare unless pressed by circumstances; their main business, in short, is the pursuit of knowledge and ascetic austerities. Moreover, they should lie on beds made of kuśa grass, and have simple and never sumptuous, meals; they should never put on fine clothes and gorgeous dresses; their duty is first to acquire knowledge themselves, and then impart it to deserving and competent pupils. Those who have prescribed for themselves such a way of life — can it be said that they have affirmed the superiority of the Brāhmaṇas to other castes for the sake of serving their own mundane self interest? As a matter of fact, those who are endowed with a nature of this kind in other countries of the world — are they not, even now, adored and treated with deep respect and is not an increase in the number of such people beneficial for the society? If it is good for the society, then is it not right that persons of all kinds, no matter whether he is a king or an ordinary subject, should earnestly try to fulfil the meagre material needs of persons of such an exalted nature who are so profoundly learned and austere in the exercise of asceticism and constantly devoted to the pursuit of knowledge? And should not the king be constantly solicitous to extend full protection to them so that they can devote themselves to the pursuit of knowledge and practice of austerities, free from all worldly cares and worries. Indeed, if one carefully reads the texts composed by the ṛṣis of old, one can easily see that it was only for the general good that the ṛṣis had urged the people belonging to the other castes to serve devoutly the Brāhmaṇas who were thus devoted to tapasyā — self-negating asceticism.

Therefore judging from the point of view social order, it cannot be said that the reverence that the Brāhmaṇas deserve according to the śāstras does not originate from self-centeredness. Nevertheless, the fact that the ṛṣis have recommended the Brāhmaṇas as

the most deserving recipients of gifts (dāna) does not seem, from a perusal of their texts, to have been enjoined only for the establishment of good social order. The act of giving signifies self-sacrifice; and this self-sacrifice has been described as an extremely virtuous act in the religious scriptures of all religion; even those who do not follow any religion praise self-sacrificing persons as highly exalted souls. Hence, it is universally acknowledged that the act of giving as a form of self-sacrifice is a virtuous act. The ṛṣis, who possessed a supernatural power of vision, after knowing thoroughly the consequences of all kinds of human actions, have declared that this act of giving (dāna) when it is aimed at Brahman-devoted, worthy Brāhmaṇas who are engaged in tapasyā does the giver immense good, mundane as well as spiritual. A close reflection on the subject must also make us admit that every action produces an effect of some kind or other. As the offering of gifts is an action it must produce some special effect in both the donor and the recipient (of gifts) and that effect (fruit) will depend to a large extent on the conditions of both. The receiver on receiving the gifts derives pleasure from it ; this is the direct result of the act of giving ; the giver too who gives with pleasure, feels joy in his heart at causing satisfaction in the heart of the recipient ; the satisfaction of the receiver causes pleasure in the heart of the giver. Gradually, his pleasure, deepened by successive acts of giving fills the heart of the giver with joy. The jīva leaves this world accompanied by the saṁskāras (residual impressions) generated by the actions done in this life ; so there is no reason to reject as irrational the idea that these joy-producing saṁskāras only increase his delight even after death. Moreover, if the pleasure of recipient of gifts acts upon the giver also, then, owing to the varying degrees of pleasure in the heart of the recipient, will the outcome in the heart of the giver also vary inevitably. It must however be admitted that according to the nature of the recipients of gifts the magnitude and the character of it (the pleasure) must be determined to a large extent. The

pleasure due to the receiving of gifts will not be the same in the case of two persons with the same kind of wants. Hence the need for discrimination between the deserving and the undeserving in the offering of gifts. Poverty is not the only criterion in determining the fruitfulness of the act of giving. It is the ṛṣis endowed with supernatural vision who have decided that the Brāhmaṇas as with their single-minded devotion to Brahman are the fittest recipients of gifts; for the reason mentioned before it also seems to be justified by reason.

On being asked by a gentleman regarding this matter recently, a sādhu Mahātmā said —“In every country, as you know, there is a king (ruler); it is his duty to all that law and order is established among his subjects; therefore, a person who oppresses others and obstructs the rule of the king's law is punished by the king by imprisonment ; while in prison he (the offender) is kept on a very meagre diet and made to work hard; some are, in the state of incarceration, subjected to physical torment ; some are even sentenced to death. Now seeing the pain inflicted on the convicted person if somebody offers him delicious dishes, the king does not become pleased with him; on the contrary he deters him from such action ; for such an act (of misdirected charity) thwarts the very intention of the punitive measure. When, on the other hand, the king's soldiers go out on a military expedition to destroy his enemies and extend his royal domain, if a person comes out to serve and assist them and removes all their wants the king, on account of all these acts, becomes pleased with him and even rewards him. In relation to the jīvas of this world God is also a king indeed; like the mundane king He too punishes for their criminal acts perpetrated in previous births by making some of them blind, some others deaf or lame and yet others by rendering them impecunious ; these condemned persons are not the fittest recipients of the really virtuous act of giving; providing for them the means of

subsistence, prompted by charity has been recommended by the śāstras and it is certainly our duty to do so. Those who do so no doubt acquire considerable merit (punya). But the Brāhmaṇas, through whom the glory of God Himself is declared to the world, who are the founders and protectors of His kingdom, who are therefore the real and the best benefactors of all His jīvas — it is they who are the fittest and the best recipients of such gifts; by the offering of gifts (dāna) to them the God Himself becomes particularly pleased and by making the giver renowned and joyous in this world bestows on him at the end (of this life) felicities like dwelling in celestial realms.”

Hence, in whichever way one may consider the matter to describe the prescription of the ṛṣis that the Brāhmaṇas are the fittest recipients, in every respect, of gifts (dāna) as rooted in selfishness is untenable. Let us now discuss the essential basis of caste divisions (jātibheda) in India.

This Creation is extremely strange and mysterious; no object in this world is exactly similar to another; many thousands of leaves, for instance grow on a single tree, and yet no two leaves are exactly alike. Again, twins are born at the same time from the same parents; in their case too, the mental characteristics and physical appearances are not identical. In all jīvas, therefore there are qualitative differences; among them, there are similarities in certain qualities ; and it is on consideration of similarities in certain qualities that species are determined; as for instance human beings, cows and trees, and so on ; among trees for instance there are diverse species like mangoes, jackfruits and palaśa (a kind of flower) and so on. Among human beings also, considering similarities and differences in qualities, ancient ṛṣis had divided them into four races (castes) : the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas, the Vaiśyas and the sūdras. This division into castes is not something man-

made and imaginary; it is perennial; it originated immediately after the creation of Man. With the mixing of these primary races (varṇa or jāti) in ascending or descending order, other mixed races have come into being. In Śrīmadbhagavadgītā 4.13 the Blessed Lord (Śrī Bhagavān) has said :

“cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ.”

- According to differences in guṇa (innate qualities) and karma (activity or vocation) I have created the four varṇas (castes).

This visible world is made of three guṇas — sattva, rajas and tamas. He in whom sattva-guṇa predominates, in whom the two other guṇas, rajas and tamas are always dominated by sattva; who is, in consequence, straight-forward in nature and kindly in disposition, devoted to tapasyā, compassionate towards all creatures, forgiving, truthful and unattached to things of this world— he is the true Brāhmaṇa²⁰. He who, longing for wealth and felicity in this and the other world, is perpetually engaged in vigorous activity, truly fearless, who nourishes, looks after dependents, who is intrepid, generous in giving, zealous in removing the sorrows of others and not at the same time averse to discourses on spiritual matters— he is the true Kṣatriya (Kṣat = distress or sorrow ; Kṣatriya is etymologically therefore one who saves from distress or sorrow). Kṣatriyas, however are of two kinds: “daiva(sura)” or “āśura”. This division into the “sura” and the “āśura” is also eternal; existing from time immemorial it testifies to the endless creative dexterity of the

²⁰ The natural differences among the three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas) have been mentioned in Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā, Chapter 14 and in other texts. “Generally speaking sattva- guṇa is that which causes knowledge and delight ; and know raja- guṇa to be that which springs from desire and impels one to action ; and lastly, know tamo- guṇa to be that which consists essentially of delusion, ignorance and sloth”.

Creator of the Universe. The difference between these two primary natures has been specially mentioned in Chapter 16 of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā. He, who is even less interested in the cultivation of knowledge and naturally longs for enjoyment of happiness by making efforts to earn money through agriculture, trade and commerce, craftsmanship and so on—he is the true Vaiśya. Even among the Vaiśyas there exists the two-fold distinction between the divine (daiva) and the demoniac (āśura). Those who are of the “daiva” type, while earning and saving money, avoid duplicity, hypocrisy and cruel conduct and are praised in society as generous, honest persons. The Vaiśyas who are naturally of the “āśura” type have an opposite nature (and character). Those, who are incapable of cultivating knowledge owing to the predominance of tamas, whose natural vocation is therefore is to work at the orders of others with docility and subjection (to the masters) who, being devoid of the enthusiasm which is characteristic of Kṣatriyas are incapable of engaging in the natural activities of the Kṣatriyas or the Vaiśyas, who therefore inevitably take to some kind of servile vocation or other—they are the true śūdras. Among them also there prevails the two-fold distinction between the divine (sura) and the demoniac (āśura).

That caste division is based on innate qualities, characteristics and natural activities is thoroughly known from a dialogue between Yudhiṣṭhira and the (cursed) king Nahuṣa in the form of a python (ajagara) which occurs in the Mahābhārata; Vanaparvan, Chapter 181. It is quoted below :

Sarpa uvāca (The snake said) :

brāhmaṇaḥ ko bhavedrājan vedyam kiñca yudhiṣṭhira,

vraivīyyatimatim tvām hi vākyaiḥ samanumīmahe.

"Oh king Yudhiṣṭhira!" The snake said : "who is Brāhmaṇa and what is the object of knowledge? From your words, you seem to be an intelligent person; so answer this question of mine."

Yudhiṣṭhira uvāca (Yudhiṣṭhira said)

satyaṁ dānaṁ kṣamā śīlamānṛśaṁsyam tapo ghrṇā,
dṛśyante yatra nāgendra sa brāhmaṇa iti smṛtaḥ.

Yudhiṣṭhira replied: "oh king of serpents! he in whom truthfulness, generosity in giving, forgiveness, character, absence of cruelty, practice of austerities and compassion are noticed has been called the true Brāhmaṇa."

*

*

Sarpa uvāca (The snake said) :

cāturvaṇyam pramāṇaṅca satyaṅca brahma caiva hi,
śūdreṣvapi ca satyaṅca dānamakrodha eva ca.
ānṛśaṁsyamahimsā ca ghrṇā caiva yudhiṣṭhira.

The snake said : Oh Yudhiṣṭhira! It is the Vedas that have enjoined the four-fold division into "varṇas" (castes) and it is the Vedas which constitute the authority regarding this

division into (four) castes and the Vedas are eternally true. (Nevertheless) truthfulness, generally, freedom from anger and cruelty, non-violence and kindness may exist even among śudras, (but should one, who happens to possess all these qualities, even though he is a śudra by birth, be regarded as a Brāhmaṇa).

Yudhiṣṭhira uvāca (Yudhiṣṭhira said):

śūdre tu yadbhavellakṣyaṁ dvije tacca na vidyate,
na vai śūdro bhavecchūdro brāhmaṇo brāhmaṇo na ca.
yatraitalakṣyate sarpa vṛttaṁ sa brāhmaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ,
yatraitanna bhavet sarpa taṁ śūdramiti nirdiśet.

Yudhiṣṭhira said: Oh serpent! A śudra in whom these characteristics are found is not śudra, and the Brāhmaṇa in whom they do not exist is not a Brāhmaṇa. Oh, serpent! The person in whom these characteristics are found is referred to as a true Brāhmaṇa and the person in whom they do not exist can be characterized as a śudra.

Sarpa uvāca (The snake said) :

yadi te vṛttato rājan brāhmaṇaḥ prasamīkṣitaḥ,
vṛthā jātistadāyusman kṛtiryāvanna vidyate.

Oh blessed (with a long life)! If the identify of a Brāhmaṇa is determined by these natural characteristics then as long as these characteristics do not function one's conviction that one is a Brāhmaṇa is a delusion.

Yudhiṣṭhira uvāca (Yudhiṣṭhira said):

jātiratra mahāsarpa manuṣyatve mahāmate,
sankarāt sarvavarṇānām duṣparīkṣeti me matiḥ.
sarve sarvāsvapatyāni janayanti sadā narāḥ,
vāmmaithunamaho janma maraṇaṅca samam nṛṇām.
idamārṣam pramāṇaṅca ye yajāmaha ityapi,
tasmācchīlam pradhāneṣṭam vidurye tattvadarśinaḥ.
prāmnābhivardhanāt puṁso jātakarma vidhīyate,
tatrāsyā mātā sāvitṛī pitā tvācārya ucyate.
tāvacchūdrasamo hyeṣa yāvadvede na jāyate,
tasminnevaṁ matidvaidhe manuḥ svāyambhuvo'vraṇīt
kṛtakṛtyāḥ punarvarṇā yadi vṛttam na vidyate
saṁkarastatra nāgendra balavān prasamīkṣitaḥ
yatredānīm mahāsarpa saṁskṛtam vṛttamiṣyate,
tam brāhmaṇamaham pūrvamuktavān bhujagottamam.

Yudhiṣṭhira said: Oh great-soul serpent! It is difficult ascertain the race (jāti) among human beings for there are admixtures found among all races (varṇas); for, all kinds of human beings give birth to offspring in all kinds of women ; besides, birth, death, speech and copulation exist equally in every human being. Affirmation as to that given by the ṛṣis is to be found in mantras like "ye yajāmahe" ; (whether we are Brāhmaṇas or not, we are performing yajña ; in case the "yajamāna"— sacrificer— is a non-Brāhmaṇa there are rules which prescribe how by the application of different mantras, the yajamāna may be

turned into a Brāhmaṇa so that he becomes eligible for the performance of the sacrificial act). Hence, the true knowers of tattva (essential principles) are those who recognize character and conduct as the primary and most desirable thing. The birth ceremony of the man is performed before the severance of the umbilical cord ; whether at that time his father is the āchārya and mother goddess Sāvitri— was a matter that was debated and finally resolved by the great Svāyambhuva Manu thus : the male child is no different from a śūdra until he is inducted into the Vedic order. Oh king of serpents! If, even after the performance of the respective sanctifying rituals (saṁskāras) of the varṇas, these native qualities (vṛtti) do not exist, you should conclude that in such a case, the element of racial admixture is dominant. The man in whom now pure and refined (natural) qualities are found— it is him that I have described before as Brāhmaṇa.

Hearing this correct answer Vṛkodara (Bhīma) was released from the oppressive coils of the serpent and king Nahuṣa too, freed from the curse, cast off his body of the python. From this it becomes clear that the Brāhmaṇas (as a caste) were distinguished as such — received the name of Brāhmaṇa on account of devotion to truth, tapasyā and other qualities and represented as worthy of reverence from others.

That the caste division described by the ancient ṛṣis was based on differences in natural qualities (characteristics) is also corroborated by evidence from the Śruti (The Vedas). It has been stated in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, (which belongs to the Sāmaveda) Chapter 4, section 4 that when a boy named Satyakāma one day approached an āchārya ṛṣi belonging to the family line of Gautama, and prostrating before him expressed his desire to have him (the great ṛṣi) as his Guru and have initiation (dīkṣā) from him, the āchārya (Master) asked him to which caste he belonged ; at this the boy replied that he did not

know this ; for when he asked his mother about this she said— “she had been devoted to the service of many guests and visitors, and got him as her son in her youth ; so she did not know his gotra (family name). All she knew was that her name is Jāvāla and that the name of her son is Satyakāma”. When the boy made this reply to the āchārya, simply and humbly, the āchārya remarked, “the kind of truthfulness and candour that this boy shows is rarely to be found in any other caste except the Brāhmaṇa”. He therefore decided that this boy must have been a Brāhmaṇa by caste.

From this it is clearly demonstrated that one's caste is determined by one's natural qualities ; this system of caste division that prevailed in India was not determined by the colour of one's skin (varṇa). The present day notion regarding this is not correct; it is mentioned in the śāstras that the great ṛṣi Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana himself was dark-complexioned. Gāyatri, in Her form as Nārāyaṇī, who is worshipped by all dvijas, (twice-born—the three higher castes) is black in colour; the Lord of Death, Dharmaraja who is always calm in His appearance has been described by the ṛṣis as dark-coloured. In this land of India, from ancient times, all the colours in the complexion of all the four castes have existed — as is known from all authentic records. Śri Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Draupadi all had a dark complexion, Śri Ramachandra was “śyāma” (the colour of storm clouds or newly grown grass”) in complexion. Hence, the opinion of those who nowadays affirm that following the division between Aryan (Ārya) and non-aryan (Anārya) caste division was introduced is not supported by the authors of the śāstras—the ṛṣis.

Though caste division is primarily a matter of innate qualities (guṇas), the ṛṣis have also mentioned karma (natural activity) as a determining factor. “Jāti-bheda” (caste division) was created by the conjunction of both “guṇa” and “karma”; this has been mentioned in

the earlier-quoted statement from Śrīmadbhagavadgītā. Generally, in the normal state of society, people choose their respective external activities according to their own internal character and disposition (prakṛti) and then adopt them (as their vocations). He whose mind is calm and steady, intelligence sharp and refined, whose heart is not naturally drawn towards acquisition of worldly felicity and prosperity, whose temperament naturally drives him to the cultivation of knowledge and practice of religion — such a person will, if there is no social obstacle, naturally engage in the activities of acquisition of knowledge and observance of religious conduct. Similarly, he whose mind is primarily concerned with loss and gain and is specially competent to judge in these matters, whose mind is naturally attracted by wealth, gold and jewels — it is indeed natural for such a person to adopt trade and commerce (as his avocation). In like manner, it is also natural for a person of a brave and valiant nature to be drawn towards martial activities. Nevertheless, owing to various obstacles and impediments in the world and fluctuation of states, men often cannot choose the activities most congenial to their nature and adopt them. Consequently having adopted a vocation that is uncongenial to their temperament, their inner nature cannot be developed and as a consequence of resorting to a business that is alien to his natural bent, gradually his inner and innate disposition too becomes perverted to suit his vocation. However, though a person of superior nature, by adopting a comparatively inferior kind of activity (vocation) is degraded and thus resembles the character of the adopted activity, a person of inferior nature, by adopting a higher vocation is not elevated in the same degree; on the contrary, the adopted higher activity not being congenial to the person of inferior nature, cannot be performed competently. Hence, if a person of inferior nature takes to a higher vocation, such a person even pollutes the society he lives in and it tends to make the incompetent agent of ill-chosen vocation an imposter or hypocrite. The ācārya ṛṣis, therefore, by observing the natural qualities and

activities of human beings, ascertained the caste and laid down rules as to which sort of persons would do which kind of work; but they have at the same time also forbidden the performance of higher activities for persons of inferior nature. All this is based on science—does not spring from selfish motives.

In the present age the Brāhmaṇas and the other castes are firmly organized among themselves to the exclusion of others and thus segregating themselves from one another. It was not so however during the "Satya yuga". Then it was sattva guṇa (the Cosmic Principle of purity and clarity) that was predominant in all jīvas; hence, differences in the natures of jīvas were less marked ; nevertheless, for the preservation of society, difference in vocations are, in all ages, inevitable ; it was by one's karma (activity or vocation) that one's caste was selected in that age; however, differences in innate qualities (guṇas), in however slight a degree, of course existed — even in Satya yuga ; indeed it was these (qualitative differences) that led to different vocations for different people. Later, at the advent of "Tretā yuga", owing to the increase in rajoguṇa, the various castes, being classified according to both guṇa and karma came to be organized and ordered hereditarily and thus separated from one another. ²¹ In that age, guṇas began to accord with the karmas. Still later, in the "Dvāpara yuga" these orders became much more hardened; for different castes diverse codes of conduct and behaviour were introduced. If, in a person of superior excellence activities and mental disposition of an inferior quality are

²¹ It cannot be denied that under the influence of the power of time the inner dispositions of jīvas change. The natural dispositions that are developed in all creatures when spring comes are not noticeable in winter ; this is common knowledge ; dogs for instance are sexually excited during the rains ; they are not so during other seasons ; if one ponders these matters calmly, one cannot have any doubt regarding what is said above.

manifested there are injunctions in Smṛti śāstras like Manusmṛhitā to degrade him socially are found — though, in actual practice they (such injunctions) came to be ignored. On the other hand, with the minds of men becoming more and more dominated by rajas and tamas it became virtually impossible for people belonging to the lower castes to be admitted into the higher castes by virtue of self-purification through exercise of asceticism (tapasyā). With the advent of “Kali yuga”, the sinful propensity having naturally increased, men have almost forgotten that the ultimate basis of caste difference is their innate dispositions and natural activities (guṇa and karma). At present it is one’s birth, one’s ancestry or family line that is the determinant factor; his innate qualities and naturally congenial activities have now ceased to be matters that deserve to be considered seriously; he continues forever to belong to the caste that he has been born to. It is true that if he commits an act which is highly subversive of current social rules of conduct he is sometimes ostracized and degraded in society; but such rules of social ostracism often do not hold good for the dissolute rich. It is not right however to hold any considered view regarding “Jātibheda”, the so called “caste division”, approved by the ṛṣis of old. The manner in which this system of “Jātibheda” has changed with the ages like Satya, Treta and so on, and been degraded, as at present,— regarding this an authentic evidence can be found in the passage quoted below from the Mahābhārata.

In the dialogue between Bhīmasena and Hanumat, the king of Vānaras (monkeys) which occurs in Chapter 149 of the “Vana Parvan” of the Mahābhārata it has been related that when Bhīmasena expressed his wish to have a vision of Hanumat at the time of crossing the sea, the great lord of the Vānaras said that under the influence of the dominant spirit of the age (yuga dharma) his form had now been changed and even if he succeeded in assuming that vigorous and effulgent form, Bhīmasena would not be able to sustain it . At

this Bhīmasena specially entreated the son of Añjanā (Hanumat) to describe at length the alterations in his form that had occurred with the changing times (ages). The dialogue that ensued between them is quoted verbatim from the original Mahābhārata below :

Bhīmasena uvāca :

yugasamkhyāṁ samācakṣu ācārañca yuge yuge ;
dharmakāmārthabhāvāṁśca karmavīrye bhavābhavau.

Hanumānuvāca :

kṛtaṁ nāma yugaṁ tāta yatra dharmah sanātanaḥ,
kṛtameva na kartavyaṁ tasmin kāle yugottame.

na tatra dharmāḥ sīdanti kṣīyante na ca vai prajāḥ,
tataḥ kṛtayugaṁ nāma kālena guṇatām gatam.

* * * *

na tasmin yuga-saṁsarge vyādhayo nendriyakṣayaḥ,
nāsūyā nāpi ruditaṁ na darpo nāpi vaikṛtaṁ.

na vighrahaḥ kutastandrā nadveṣo na ca paśūnam,
na bhayaṁ nāpi santāpo na ceryā na ca matsaraḥ.

tataḥ paramekaṁ brahma sā gatiryoginām parā,
ātmā ca sarvabhūtānām śuklo nārāyaṇastadā.

brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyāḥ śūdrāśca kṛtalakṣaṇāḥ,
kṛte yuge samabhavan svakarmaniratāḥ prajāḥ.

samāśrayaṁ samācāraṁ samajñānañca kevalam,
tadāhi samakarmāṇo varṇā dharmānavāpnuvan.

ekadeva samāyuktā ekamantravidhikriyāḥ;
pṛthagdharmāstvekavedā dharmamekamanuvratāḥ.

caturāśramayuktena karmaṇā kālayoginā,
akāmaphala-saṁyogāt prāpnuvanti parāṁ gatim.

ātmayoga-samāyukto dharmo'yaṁ kṛtalakṣaṇaḥ,
kṛte yuge cātuṣpāda-ścāturvarṇasya śāśvataḥ.

etat kṛtayugaṁ nāma traiguṇya-parivarjitam;
tretāmapī nivodha tvaṁ yasmin sattvaṁ pravartate.

pādena hrasate dharmo raktatāṁ yāti cācyutaḥ,
satyapravṛttāśca narāḥ kriyādharmaparāyaṇāḥ.

tato yajñāḥ pravartante dharmāśca vividhaḥ kriyāḥ,
tretāyāṁ bhāvasaṁkalpāḥ kriyādānaphalopagāḥ.

pracalanti na vai dharmā-stapodāna parāyaṇāḥ,
svadharmasthāḥ kriyāvanto narāstretāyugebhavan.

Dvāpare ca yuge dharmo dvibhāgonāḥ pravartate,
veṣṇurvai pītatām yāti caturdhā veda eva ca.

tato'nye ca caturvedā – strivedāśca tathāpare,
dvivedāścaikavedāścā - pyanṛcaśca tathāpare .

evam śāstreṣu bhinneṣu vahudhā nīyate kriyā,
tapodāna pravṛttāca rājasī bhavati prajā.

ekavedasya cājñānā dvedāste vahavaḥ kṛtāḥ,
sattvasya ceha vibhramśāt satye kaścidavasthitāḥ.

satyāt pracyavamānānām vyādhayo vahavo'bhavan,
kamāścopadravāścaiva tadā vai daivakāritāḥ.

Yairadyamānāḥ subhṛśam tapastapyanti mānavāḥ,
kāmakāmāḥ svargakāmā yajñāmstanvanti cāpare.

evam dvāparamāsādyā prajāḥ kṣīyantyadharmataḥ,
pādenaikena kaunteya dharmāḥ kaliyuge sthitāḥ.

tāmasam yugamāsādyā kṛṣṇo bhavati keśavaḥ,

vedācārāḥ praśāmyanti dharmāyājñakriyāstathā.

ītayo vyādhayastandrā doṣāḥ krodhādayastathā;
upadravāḥ pravartante ādhayaḥ kṣudbhayaṁ tathā.

yugeṣvāvartamāneṣu dharmo vyāvartate punaḥ,
dharṁ vyāvartamāne tu loko vyāvartate punaḥ.

loke kṣīṇe kṣayaṁ yānti bhāvāloka-pravartakāḥ,
yugakṣayakṛtāḥ dharmāḥ prārthanāni vikurvate.

etat kali-yugaṁ nāma acirāt yat pravartate,
yugānuvartanaṁ tvetat kurvanti cira-jīvināḥ .

Bhimsena said, oh great hero! The number of ages, and the kind of social codes of conduct, religion, nature of worldly desires and state of material prosperity, ideas, actions, powers and the genesis and destruction of good and evil effects—tell me about all these. Hanumat said, my son! The age in which the perennial religion (dharma—the higher Law) prevailed is called “Kṛtayuga” (Satya yuga). In that best of all ages all (contemplated) actions would be accomplished, no deed would remain incomplete. This is why it is called “Kṛtayuga” (the age in which everything is fully accomplished). Then dharma did not languish nor the people suffer; later, with the passage of time its dominance declined. In that age (Kṛtayuga) there was no disease, no weakness or defect of the sense organs, no feeling of malice or envy, no object to lament on. At that time there was no arrogance, hypocrisy, feeling of hostility, laziness, ill will, duplicity or cunning, fear, mental anguish,

envy or jealousy and intolerance of other's prosperity. Then the supreme Brahman, the final goal of the yogins, was the soul object of meditation. Nārāyaṇa, the Self (Ātman) of all beings was then white in colour. Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras were all recognized then by their own actions and the people were engaged in activities that were congenial to their own natures and dispositions. All at that time had the same spiritual support (all were devoted to Parabrahman), all practiced the same rules of conduct and possessed the same knowledge and all the castes (varṇas) attained dharma by worshipping and meditating on Parabrahman and doing the same kind of work. All would be resting in the one Ātman who is pure consciousness ; the one Praṇava (Om) mantra was the mantra of all, all performed the same spiritual exercise like listening to Vedānta and practiced the same kind of meditation. Through the performance of diverse religious rituals all turned to the Vedas which established the Unity of the one Universal Principle for knowledge ;as dharma followed that one cosmic Principle and the desire for the fruits of dharma being absent, men attained the supreme state through the performance of actions appropriate for the respective (four) stages of life (āśrama). This dharma with its yoga of the Ātman is the prime characteristic of Kṛtayuga; during this Kṛtayuga the perennial dharma of all the four varṇas (castes) was catuṣpāda, that is full and complete with "four quarters". Now hear about Tretā yuga which, on account of the admixture of rajoguṇa, is the age which introduces the practice of yajñas (ritual sacrifices). At that time dharma is diminished by one quarter (pāda) and the Immutable Viṣṇu turns red in colour. Devoted to the religion of Truth people then adhered to dharma which was primarily characterized by religious rituals (kriyā); yajñas, therefore, flourished at that time and dharmas, dominated by various rituals, were introduced and all actions being planned with an eye to their fruits, men attained all their desired objects by the performance of yajñas accompanied by liberal acts of giving (dāna). People then were devoted to tapasyā and

dāna; they never deviated from dharma. During Tretā yuga men, adhering to the dharmas appropriate for their own varṇas, performed the activities suitable for each varṇas. In Dvāpara yuga, dharma was diminished by two quarters (=half) and Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) became yellow-coloured; also, the Vedas were divided into four (sections). After that some became versed in all the four Vedas, some in three of them, some in two and yet others in only one; some, again, became devoid of any knowledge of the Vedas at all. The śāstras then having become diverse, many kinds of activities (rituals) came to be introduced: people then became engaged in tapasyā and dāna, prompted by ideas dominated by rajoguṇa. Men being unable then to comprehend fully all the Vedas they were divided into many; owing to the decline in intelligence, only a few became devoted to Truth. Owing to the lapse from Truth, many kinds of diseases appeared and many kinds of desires and supernaturally caused calamities occurred. Tormented by these desires and diseases men started practicing tapasyā in order to prevent them (tapasyā in other words was not done, as it used to be in Satya and Tretā yugas, for mokṣa and bhāvaśuddhi — purification of the state of mind). Men began to perform various elaborate rituals and sacrifices; some to fulfil their desires, some others for the attainment of Heaven. Thus with the advent of Dvāpara yuga people suffered degradation through lack of dharma. Oh Bhīmasena! In Kali yuga dharma rests on only "one quarter". With the coming of this age, which is dominated by tamas, Nārāyaṇa becomes black in colour; Vedic observances, dharma, yajña and religious rituals — all these disappear. Natural calamities like excessive rain and draught, moral defects like indolence and anger, mental troubles and various disturbances like hunger and fear appear in this age. Under the influence of the inexorable course of the age dharma dwindles to nothing ; men having languished, leading ideas involving dharma and jñāna too declined (That is to say, even acts that nourish men, would, owing to the unfitness of the agents and the extinction of the rules of conduct, instead of being

nourishing become destructive). Thus dharma having declined owing to the influence of the age, it begins to produce effects opposite to those intended. I have described to you now (the nature of) Kali yuga which will start soon. Even those who live long follow thus the dominant trends of these yugas.²²

In very ancient times when one's "jāti" (race or caste) would be determined by one's innate qualities and natural activities, when one's jāti would not be identified by one's birth alone, rules governing social relations and norms of conduct were not as rigid as now ; as evidence for this the following verses from the eleventh Book of Śrīmat Bhāgavata are quoted below :

priyavrato nāma sūto manoh svāyambhuvasya yaḥ,
tasyāgnīdhrastatonābhir - ṛṣabhastatsuth smṛtaḥ.
tamahurvāsudevāmśaṁ mokṣadharmā-vivakṣayā,
avatīrṇaṁ sūtaśataṁ tasyāsīdvedapāragam.

²² That with the passage of time all animals, even plants and herbs become enfeebled and smaller is a fact the evidence of which can be seen everywhere. Everybody can perceive the fact that animals like elephants, horses, dogs, cows and so on are becoming weaker and smaller. Even in Europe, warriors five hundred years ago used to assume protective armour which few nowadays are able to carry. Like bodily strength mental vigour also is seen to suffer diminution everywhere. The theory of evolution that is now current in the Western world is unacceptable to our Hindu śāstras and may be termed as fictitious. The same is true of the theory which states that human race has evolved from inferior creatures like the monkeys; there is no evidence to prove this. In fact, the proof that human race existed perennially has been established with the help of geological sciences. The scope of this book, however, does not allow these matters to be specifically discussed.

teṣāṃ vai bharato jyeṣṭho nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ,
vikhyātaṃ varṣametad yannāmnā bhāratamadbhutam.

sa bhuktabhogāṃ tyakte mām nirgatastapasā harim,
upāsīnastatpadavīm lebhe vai janmabhistribhiḥ .

teṣāṃ nava navadvīpa-patayo'sya samantataḥ,
karma- tantra-praṇetāra ekāsītirdvijātayaḥ.

navābhavanmahābhāgā munayohyarthaśaṃsinaḥ,
śramaṇā vātaraśanā ātmavidyā-viśāradāḥ.

kavirharirantarīkṣaḥ pravuddhaḥ pippalāyanaḥ,
āvirhotro'tha drumila-ścamasaḥ karabhājanaḥ.

ta ete bhagavadrūpaṃ viśvaṃ sadasadātmakam,
ātmanovyatirekeṇa paśyanto vyacaranmahīm.

Svāyambhuva Manu had a son Priyavrata by name. That Priyavrata had a son named Agnīdhra ; Agnidhra's son was known as Nābhi, who, again, had a son Ṛṣabha by name. This Ṛṣabhadeva, according to old tradition, had appeared as a partial incarnation of Bhagavān Vāsudeva for revealing to all the dharma which leads to "mokṣa" (liberation). He had one hundred sons born to him who were all well-versed in the Vedas. The eldest among them was named Bharata; he was a great bhakta (devotee) of Nārāyaṇa. That part of Area (varṣa) which had been known before as "Ajanābha", since then has come to be

known as Bhāratavarṣa after his (Bharata's) name. After enjoying his great kingdom he took sannyāsa and left his home and by worshipping the Blessed Lord Śrī Hari through tapasyā, he attained the status of Bhagavān after three incarnations; of the remaining ninety nine sons, nine (namely, Kuśāvarta, Ilāvarta, Brahmavarta, Malaya, Ketu, Bhadrasena, Indrasprk, Vidharbha and Kīkaṭa) ruled the nine regions of India. Of the remaining sons, eighty one became famous as Brāhmaṇas introduced the "karma kāṇḍa" (Vedic sacred rituals like yajñas) and nine, after sedulously cultivating "ātmavidyā" (knowledge of the Ātman) became masters in the supreme knowledge (of the Ātman) ; they became so thoroughly competent in finding out the supreme object of spiritual quest (paramārtha) that they lost all attachment to objects of this world ; they wandered about without any clothes to cover their bodies. Then names are : Kavi, Hari, Antarīkṣa, Prabuddha, Pippalāyana, Āvirhotra, Drumila, Camasa and Karabhājana. Seeing the entire universe, in its subtle as well as gross manifestations, as one with the Divine with whom his own self is essentially one they roamed in the world.

Similar stories have been related in other Purāṇas also. From this it becomes clear that of the hundred sons that were born to the Kṣatriya king Ṛṣabha, the son of the Kṣatriya ruler Nābhi, ten took to the vocation of the Kṣatriyas and becoming kings began to rule different parts of India; eighty-one among them, becoming Brāhmaṇas, who were pioneers in the sphere of (Vedic) karma, excelled in the performance of Vedic rights and nine others, becoming "muni"s (sages) reposing in the self (Ātman) cultivated the dharma that leads to mokṣa. From this it becomes perfectly clear that during Satya yuga social bonds and restrictions regarding caste division were not prevalent as they are now, people at that time being generally endowed with sattva guṇa there was not much difference in their conduct and behaviour ; race or caste (jāti) usually accorded with their activities or

vocations. Nevertheless, just as with the change of seasons differences occur in the degree of natural development and growth among trees, creepers and herbs, so with the change in the course of time the inherent faculties of human beings having changed, the nature of this caste division also has been transformed.

The Truth-seeing ṛṣis of old had ascertained that this phenomenal world is constituted of three guṇas (Cosmic Principles) : "sattva", "rajas" and "tamas". All these three guṇas are indestructible and constitute the body of God as the Mahāvīrāṭ (as manifested in the vast infinite Cosmos). However, at certain periods sattva guṇa becomes dominant ; at others rajoguṇa ; at yet others it is tamas which dominates. Thus the wheel of Time (kāla-cakra) is eternally moving round and changing. Whichever of the three guṇas arises at a particular time becomes powerful and dominant, and it is the action of that guṇas which manifests itself as predominant among all living creatures ; the other two guṇas remain, at that time dormant, or, being enfeebled, become mildly helpful in the operation of the ascendant guṇa. Nevertheless, all these three guṇas are special kinds of energy and every form of energy (śakti) after performing appropriate actions, gradually become enfeebled (diminished in vigour) and exhausted ; when one form of energy becomes thus enfeebled, one of the other two becomes ascendant. Then, this new form which has become dominant, again establishing ascendancy over all living creatures, drives them into activities that are consonant with it and makes those in whom the ascendant guṇa is more manifest, successful and thriving. This is the perennial law of the phenomenal world. The ṛṣis have affirmed this. This law is so inviolable that even the gross world of matter is not able to transgress it; it has been discovered that in the Western world machines, after performing appropriate operations for a long time, at last reaches such a state that they cannot be made to perform further operations, even though the constituent parts of the

machine remain intact. It is only later, after they have been made to rest from work for a long time that they again become capable of performing work. Thus, the period in which sattva guṇa thrives is called the Satya yuga ; when in the course of time, sattva guṇa diminishes in force the previously dormant rajoguna begins to manifest its power little by little. Thus, the age in which sattva guṇa, though dominant, is mixed with the activity of rajo guṇa is called Tretā yuga and as sattva guṇa is even more diminished in force and rajo guṇa becomes predominant, and tamo guṇa is also awakened—that age is called Dvāpara yuga. At last, when sattva is reduced to an extremely weakened state and even rajo guṇa becomes diminished in force, and it is the tamo guṇa that becomes predominant—that age in which tamo guṇa prevails, is called Kali yuga. Hence, the fact that with the change in the course of time the nature of scientific division into castes too has altered is indeed natural. Looking, therefore, at the present-day caste division, the wisdom of the ancient ṛṣis cannot be questioned in the slightest degree.

Yet, though the present-day division into castes is not scientific, can it be asserted without question that by its existence only harm has been done to this country and no good at all? Indeed, “jāti bheda” in some form or other is seen to be present in all other countries of the world. People returning from England have stated that, in the society of that country the poor and the low cannot take their meals seated at the same table with the rich and the aristocratic people. Not only that ; if the son of a poor father, becoming affluent by virtue of his own intelligence, knowledge and toil, attains the same status as that of people belonging to the landed aristocracy, even then his impecunious father cannot dine at the same table with persons who are his (son's) equals. Thus, it becomes evident on reflection that in all present day societies in the world, the practice of caste division in some form or other is prevalent and this practice being thus prevalent, all classes of

people belonging to those societies regard this as natural and do not repudiate. If in other societies the caste system of the societies concerned does not hinder people from uniting together for a generally salutary act, how can it be affirmed, in the absence of specific evidence that it is in this country alone, the custom of caste division - by causing dissensions among people of this country - has obstructed united action in any matter? In other countries of the world caste division, in most places, depends on the abundance or paucity of money or wealth. In England even the eminent thinker Herbert Spencer and the famous theologian Cardinal Newman are not entitled socially to sit together at the dinner table with exalted lords (land-owners). A caste division of this kind is wholly alien and antithetical to the nature of the Indian people. In this country, even today, dharma and jñāna (knowledge) are more appreciated than wealth; however great a king may be, he will, after approaching a sādhu or a sannyāsin clad in a single and small piece of cloth (usually, a loin-cloth) and vowed to ascetic austerities, sit down before him - usually on a low seat - and will often consider himself fortunate if he can partake of the remnants of meals taken by a homeless mendicant or a poor Brāhmaṇa. Is this not an excellent proof of the fact that the Indian people are even today naturally more inclined to knowledge and religion? And are not dharma and jñāna, as a matter of fact, more truly characteristic of humanity than wealth and earthly possessions? A careful examination will therefore reveal that even the caste division that is prevalent at present testifies to this high and noble idealism that characterizes the Indian people.

It has been stated earlier that after the full-fledged appearance of Kali yuga India was at first filled with trouble and turmoil owing to internecine clashes between smaller kings and later, under the impact of foreign invasions, abductions and domination having been afflicted and oppressed for more than a millennium, has now become utterly devoid of real

worth and inner substance. That, under these circumstances, all kinds of social bonds will be loosened—isn't it natural? The Brāhmaṇas, in the secure state of society of earlier days, being protected by the kings and their subjects were engaged from generation to generation in the practice of sacred religious rights, study and teaching without any disturbance and without worries of any kind ; they had no other vocation. They could, therefore achieve considerable progress in matters of religion and the pursuit of knowledge and coming in contact with them the common people were able to develop themselves in dharma, jñāna and holiness. Since the introduction of alien rule (in India) so far from being assisted and encouraged by the kings, the Brāhmaṇas were oppressed. Nevertheless, the assistance of Brāhmaṇas being indispensable in all social rights and ceremonies the Brāhmaṇas, though neglected by the kings, by receiving the cooperation of the common people belonging to Hindu society and earning their livelihood with great difficulty have somehow kept up their hereditary pursuits like performing sacred religious rights and by studying and teaching of sacred texts. But owing to the state of uncertainty in the means of livelihood and the society being filled with all sorts of troubles and corruption as an inevitable consequence of them, the Brāhmaṇas had naturally lapsed from their hereditary spiritual activities like the practice of austerities and meditation ; having fallen thus from their aim of life the sanctifying "saṁskāras" (sacraments, rites) are no longer held in esteem ; even the holy sacrament of "Upanayana" (investment with the sacred thread and initiation in "Gāyatri" mantra) has been, in most cases, reduced to a mockery. Being shorn of saṁskāras and devoid of tapasyā, the seed of Brāhmaṇa-nature that they received as ancestral heritage is now almost extinguished like fire covered with ashes. So how can they now deserve esteem from others? Consequently, many among them, abandoning the activities and the codes of conduct of their forefathers are now employed in vocations appropriate for the śūdras (for instance, services with salaries). But

an intelligent person must admit that it is because a special class of people existed in this country for the cultivation of dharma and jñāna that even after a thousand years of turmoil and upheavals the śāstras, replete with dharma and jñāna of our country, have not been wholly lost even today and the cultivation of knowledge completely extinct; and even the common people of this country have remained comparatively refined in their minds and devoted to dharma (righteousness). Indeed, even in this present degraded condition no other race has as yet been able to surpass them (the Indians) in true humanity and even in general intelligence they occupy the highest place in the world.

Here it is mostly the Brāhmaṇa who have been spoken about. Even when one comes to think of the other classes of people the state of affairs revealed is the same. Thanks to the manner in which this custom of caste division has existed from ancient times - every vocation has, in this country, become the distinguishing mark of a caste; for the activities that have come to be inherited from the past and thus performed for generations are the determining and motivating factors of castes. Thus the Kṣatriyas and the landlords exercising the functions of the Kṣatriyas had preserved, notwithstanding many obstacles, hereditarily the art of warfare; since they did not have any competence and sense of glory in any other vocation. As the craftsmen and artisans too have preserved for generations their natural artistic activities even after a more-than-a-millennium-long time of troubles, artifacts and works of art have not totally disappeared from India. On the other hand, the kings and the Kṣatriyas, according to the rules of division into castes, possess a special competence in the art of warfare; when crises like war came it was the Kṣatriyas who were specially involved; and people of all other classes in the society were not directly affected in the same manner. Hence it is that one king after another, one race after another had occupied this land and left it, and by the consequent series of battles and

stream of blood India has been swept for more than a thousand years ; and yet the Hindu society has been able, though with great difficulty, to preserve and maintain its existence. This Kṣatriya valour has now been almost totally annihilated and the art of wielding weapons has wholly disappeared ; indeed it is true that the knowledge of other matters has diminished a great deal—which, under these circumstances, is inevitable ; nevertheless, it is mainly on account of the caste system prevailing in this country that the other branches of knowledge have not been wholly extinguished. The various classes being forced to depend on one another for the necessary commodities of life they have so far been mutually helpful and co-operative; this is why poverty and misery have not been able to overcome this country in so considerable an extent. However, owing to the competitive tendency engendered by the latter-day policies in trade and commerce, food grains have been exported in large quantities to other countries, and as a result of this, the stock of food grains has become depleted in India for some time past and for various other reasons as well, India has become a land haunted by perpetual famine. Daily necessities and commodities of other kinds having been imported from other countries to India and spread to all parts of the country, the Indian traders and merchants who deal in these commodities have become totally derelict; besides, they are not receiving any special cooperation from the farmers of this land; and, naturally, most of them have now become plunged in poverty and general distress. Hence it is that people of all classes are equally eager to earn their living, no matter how modest it is, by resorting to any work or vocation that comes their way and caste division among them has now been reduced to no more than a name. The present system of caste division in India therefore, though un-scientific and obviously marred by many drawbacks, it cannot be said that it has produced so far

only evil effects and it is not right to turn skeptic on this account (namely, this matter of caste distinction) about the wisdom of the ancient ऋषिः.²³

²³ How by removing the defects of the present caste system and reform society by following scientific methods— to decide this is outside the purview of this book. Nevertheless, the attempts that are now being made to reform society without taking any account of men's innate qualities and naturally congenial activities cannot be accepted as scientific ; and the notion that failing to construct the society on a scientific base to dissolve arbitrarily the existing society will benefit the country does not seem to be justified. No doubt many superstitions exist in our present society ; nevertheless, there exist at the same time, many good habits and modes of thought; through this the purity and distinctiveness of our society are being preserved in a large measure. It does not seem that to loosen the bonds of society in imitation of alien concepts (of the West) will lead to salutary consequences ; for there is good ground to suspect that with the loss of the natural religious sensibility of the Indian people, social prestige will be founded solely on the degree of affluence one possesses. On the other hand, the traditional values that men of alien societies cherish to preserve the sanctity of their society have little chance of penetrating into Indian society. Besides, the universal spirit of competition that renders Western societies more or less disturbed inevitably leads to trouble and conflict. Its consequence, in the economic sphere is the (disproportionately) excessive affluence of comparatively few people and the excessive poverty of others. The outward splendour of Western societies is indicative of the prosperity of only a handful of people. People from the outside cannot easily realize, after seeing this external magnificence, the dismal condition within. So seeing the prosperity of the Western people at the present the Indian people should not, without considering the matter carefully, try to emulate them in every way. One ought to remember in particular the fact that the civilization and the prosperity of the West are a comparatively recent phenomenon in the history of mankind. It cannot be traced back beyond two or three hundred years ; The signs of its decline have already become clearly evident. For the Indian society therefore, a society which has been immovable like a mountain for ages, this ephemeral civilization is not worthy of indiscriminate and wholesale imitation.

The equality of men in all matters is the present social and political ideal of the West. The competitive spirit referred to above arises, in a large measure, from it and is grounded in it. "All men have equal rights"— many are doubtless inspired and delighted the moment they hear it. That in a country in which the supreme excellence of equal-mindedness towards all beings, both moving and immovable (living or inanimate) has been pronounced, it is very natural that many would accept the above view enthusiastically. One should

remember, nevertheless, that, the Vedantic equality (samatva) is intellectual and spiritual equality; it does not signify equality of capacity and competence (adhikāra) in practice. What vedantic equality really is will be explained when we come to discuss Vedānta Darśana. This world has been created through diversity in the manifestation of energy (śakti); the power that is instilled into a poison tree is the very opposite of what the Creator of the Universe has infused into the tree which gives forth ambrosia. Hence, owing to infinite divergences in the inherent powers, differences in the capacity and competence among various jīvas are inevitable. Human beings, animals, birds, flies and insects are all alike so far as their jīvatva (jīva-nature) is concerned all jīvas are created by God ; and yet, no intelligent person will, on that account admit that all jīvas are equal in their capacities. Therefore, there being infinite differences among human beings as regards power, there cannot be equality in respect of capacity (adhikāra), though all are alike in respect of humanity and some other (general) characteristics. Owing to this inequality of power, differences in their activities (karmas) are unavoidable. Capacity and competence is the result of karma; hence differences in karma also are inevitable. There is no scientific reason therefore behind the view that all human beings are equal in their capacity and competence (adhikāra); it is based on mere passing sentimentalism and flimsy fancy. Even in those countries in which social and political ideas are predominantly based on this concept of equality of natural aptitudes and capacities, this equality of capacities exists only in name, not in actual practice. In actual practice it is only the exceedingly few powerful people who obtain high privileges; others only follow their orders. It follows that no stable society can be constructed on this unrealistic conception. The ancient Indian ideal of society is (based on) differentiation among classes (or castes). To divide human beings into special classes, taking cognizance of their natural aptitudes for particular activities and thus to ascertain their special rights—this is the excellent method of social construction discovered by the Ārya ṛṣis. Respect and reverence towards the more powerful ; friendship, love and esteem towards equals ; tenderness and compassion towards the less powerful— this is the Indian vision of the ideal society. The social practice of India is based on this. To regard another person as one's equal without being equal to him in power, falsely, from self-delusion - this is not the Indian ideal of society.

If the responsibility for directing offices involving higher rights and privileges are entrusted in unworthy persons and, in consequence, other people are oppressed by his selfishness and persecution, ideas of equal rights for all, when propagated, are apt to excite the people who may thus be driven to condemn and punish the despot; and doubtless, through this, temporary benefit may result at other times and in certain situations. Nevertheless, it becomes clear on reflecting on this matter deeply that this view does not truly

express the permanent state of the human mind even during such times of agitation ; It is actually, even during such times, a perversion of a negative though natural, tendency (of mind). Without being superior to others through any special power or worth, to obtain, or try to obtain, better rights and privileges than all others through unethical methods or unfair means is not right. This is that negative tendency of mind which is universal among mankind. Besides, every human being possesses, in greater or less degree, certain powers which are common as well as certain powers which are uncommon; hence, every person has rights corresponding to them (these powers). However powerful a particular person may happen to be, it is wrong for him to try to eliminate these rights of others; this too, is a natural conviction of every human being. This conviction too being conducive to the aforementioned notion, urges men to prevent oppression. Nevertheless, the function of these two human propensities is only to punish and to overcome the oppressor. After that function is fulfilled that egalitarian doctrine is unable to render any appreciable benefit to the common people of the society. At other times too, if a good and honest person happens to hold this view his feeling of esteem for others may, no doubt in some cases, be increased ; but, in most cases, by arousing the competitive spirit it tends to destroy the peace and pure-heartedness of society. It is not rational therefore to try to build a society by adopting this unrealistic doctrine.

By reflecting on the matter deeply, an intelligent person will certainly understand that if the different vocations are divided into distinct classes or categories the minds of men living in a society are purified by diminution in competitive spirit and greater stability and peace are established in society and the hereditarily acquired knowledge being developed in the minds of young children, progressive achievement of excellence becomes easier. Moreover, the diverse classes being compelled to cooperate with one another no particular class is able to ignore or look down upon another and economic inequality and poverty do not increase in any appreciable degree. In order to maintain the prestige of one's community one can try to carefully look after the progress and development of its own people and as a consequence of every particular social class being comparatively limited and constituted by the communion of only a few people, everybody has greater opportunity to take care of his own moral progress. Besides, each community becomes careful to keep up its own importance in the eyes of every other; as a result of this, the purity of every community is increased. For all these reasons, to try to establish the society on the competitive spirit alone, in the manner of Western societies by totally rejecting the system of caste (class) division cannot be accepted as right.

In the present age the majority of men are not, as they were, in Satya yuga, endowed with Sattva guṇa and though the element of tamas is predominant in people in general, it cannot be denied that in this

BOOK 2, SECTION '1'

INTRODUCTION

Another point of objection that is raised against the infallibility of the ācārya ṛṣis is : If they are really infallible how are differences of opinion possible among them? Wherever there

age, difference in the nature and disposition of people are very great. Hence, differences in natural tendencies in the sphere of conduct and behaviour are considerable. Reforming all the classes (castes) according to innate qualities of men in a manner befitting the place and time, adopting the teachings of the all-seeing ṛṣis and establishing an order by the acceptance of the fit and the worthy and the rejection of the unfit and the unworthy indicated by the ṛṣis, the attempt to avoid the evil and the harmful in the future is what seems to be the best way of reforming Indian society. However, men who possess the requisite knowledge and power in this matter are not found nowadays. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that in some cases some superstitions that prevail now are so harmful as to be intolerable for many people; people are apt therefore to totally dissolve all rules and customs that bind the society. The fact is, in this country at present, in all spheres of life, a terrible time has arrived. There is however one hopeful sign : sages (ṛṣis) who are capable of building and reforming a society on a scientific basis have again begun to appear in India now and one hears that they will become particularly active in days to come. From the manner in which Western physical sciences have advanced at present, the time is ripe for men all over the world to receive, even if partially, the ancient and perennial spiritual philosophy of India. By taking into account of the historical phenomenon of the advent of the British in India the ṛṣis will now restore the glory of India, indications of this have begun to manifest themselves by slow degrees. So the people of India! You must not give way to despair. By getting your mind and character purified and initiating the members of your families into your characteristic national ideals that are inculcated in the śāstras, remain for some time, in patience and by increasing the force of character among the people of your society try to make every village, as far as possible, self-reliant. The supreme deity whom you adore will soon relieve all your sorrows and sufferings by revealing to you His pure Light of Knowledge.

is difference of opinion it must be that one opinion or the other is erroneous and if the opinion of one is false then the opinion of the other too may be so and if it is I who have to decide who is right and who mistaken, then even if my judgement is not infallible, it is this erroneous judgement of mine that has to be regarded as my guide. Hence, with regard to evidence (pramāṇa) "authority" (āpta-vākya) ceases to have any importance.

Regarding this matter we hold that — these objections are raised because the manner in which the sacred texts were composed by the ṛṣis is unknown to us. Our method of writing a book is this : we first think about a subject, arrive at a conclusion or solution (mīmāṃsā), and then, put all this into writing (a book) and publish it for the general public, not so was the method followed by the ṛṣis. It is written in Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa :

"vidyayā sārdaṁ mriyeta na vidyā muṣare vapet."

— the brāhmaṇa would much rather die with all his knowledge than sow it in barren land. In other words, impart it to one who is not competent to receive it.

Again, in the same Brāhmaṇa it is written:

vidyā ha vai brāhmaṇa mājagāma, tavāhamasmi tvaṁ mām pālāya,
anarhate mānine naiva mā dā, gopāya mām śreyasī te'hamasmīti.

—Approaching the brāhmaṇa Vidyā (knowledge) said : "I take refuge in you. You nourish me. Do not give me away to one who is unworthy and arrogant. Preserve me carefully. You will derive benefit from me.

In Manusamhitā too the same prescription is found :

nāprṣṭaḥ kasyacid śrūyāt na cānyāyena p ṛcchataḥ,
jānannapi hi medhāvī jaḍavalloka ācaret. (2/110)

vidyayaiva samam kāmam martavyam brahmavādinā,
āpadyapi hi ghorāyam natvenāmiriṇe vapet. (2/113)

vidyā brāhmaṇa metyāha śevadhiste'smi rakṣa mam,
asūyakāya mam mā dā-stathā syām vīryavattamā. (2/114)

yameva tu śucim vidyāt niyatam brahmacāriṇam,
tasmai mam śrūhi viprāya nidhipāyāpramādine. (2/115)

—Do not impart knowledge to any one without being asked ; also do not impart knowledge to him who asks in an improper manner (by transgressing the rules regarding the right manner of asking questions— with humility and reverence). Even if he knows (the answer) the intelligent person will behave like one who is dumb among people (in such a place). The Brahman-knowing person would much rather die than sow vidyā in barren ground even in times of grave crises. Approaching the brāhmaṇa Vidyā said : "I am your (invaluable) treasure ; please protect me. Do not offer me to a person who has no reverence ; only then will my power remain intact ; to him whom you know to be always pure and living a holy life and will preserve me carefully like the trustee — to such a brāhmaṇa offer me."

From this it will become clear that the old ācāryas (teachers) never taught anything without being asked and to one who is not fit (to receive the knowledge imparted to him) as our present teachers do and their teachings never exceeded the limits of the subject in question ; and even then, they never forgot to take cognizance of the asking pupil's power of comprehension.²⁴

This is the reason why in all their books dealing with ultimate principles, the competence (adhikāra) and the subject of enquiry have been ascertained at the very outset. In the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā Darśana, for instance, the subject of enquiry and the competence of the pupil have been determined in the very first sūtra: "athāto dharmajijñāsā" (Then comes the desire to know the nature of Dharma) and thus we are made to understand that no topic other than what has been asked about is to be found anywhere in the text. In Vedānta Darśana too, in the very first sūtra, "athāto brahmajijñāsā" (then comes the desire to know Brahman.), in the same way the nature of the subject asked about and the competence of the disciple have been determined. In the Pātañjala (yoga) Darśana by the sūtra, "atha yogānuśāsanam" (now the nature of Yoga will be taught), the author has stated at the very outset the fact that it is Yoga which the disciple wants to know about and that it is Yoga alone that is the subject-matter of the text. Thus in the Sāṃkhya Darśana, again, in the first sūtra, "atha trividhaduḥkhātyantanivṛttiratyantapuruṣārthaḥ" (now the complete

²⁴ But this rule does not apply to dedicated disciples; for such disciples, after taking refuge in the Sadguru at the outset surrendered himself to them (the Sadgurus) waiting to receive the teachings for which they were fit. So, understanding their individual capacity and competence the ṛṣis would impart to them the needed lessons.

cessation of the three kinds of suffering as the final goal of man is to be discussed), the subject matter of the text has been determined at the outset. In the Vaiśeṣika and Nyāya Darśana too the same method has been followed.

It is also well-known that the ancient ācāryas (teachers), after ascertaining the competence and capacity of the students used to teach them orally at first, according to the questions asked by that latter. These terse sayings that we now find in the form of sūtras, have come down to us for many centuries through oral tradition ; in comparatively recent times, with the increase of the influence of Kali-yuga, through social turmoil such as anarchy, the overall excellence of the country declined and the āśramas (hermitages) of the ṛṣis became desolate ; when, on account of this, many kinds of disorder took place, apprehending the disappearance of those teachings, they were written down and preserved in book form. However these written texts were kept in the custody of the teachers; the pupils read copies of these texts; it is only recently, during the British rule these texts have been published through the printing press for all to read. Hence, on considering the methods of teaching employed by the ācāryas it will become clear that, there is no reason to think that in these philosophical texts, the full knowledge of the original ācāryas has been revealed, and when differences exist in the receptive capacities of the disciples, and when the subject of inquiry is not the same in all cases, divergences in the imparted lessons are inevitable ; noticing only therefore, these divergences in these philosophical texts one should not suppose that the ṛṣis held contradictory views. Indeed, if one carefully examines the teachings as revealed in different philosophical texts (Darśanas), no real contradiction will be noticed. In many places, various modern religious sects, in order to sustain their own views or through sheer mistake have misinterpreted these philosophical texts ; this is why many modern scholars think that the teachings

found in these philosophical texts contradict one another. The main reason for this is that unless one's mind has been refined through sādhanā (spiritual effort) the teaching of the ancient ṛṣis are not fully realized. In the present age, the ṛṣis having concealed themselves and in the absence of competent spiritual teachers in our society, sādhakas (spiritual aspirants) and enlightened persons have become scarce ; hence, those who are regarded as scholars and thinkers on account of their having read a number of books—even their commentaries, called “bhāṣyas” and “tīkas” — are esteemed by the present-day scholars of our country as infallible as the texts of ancient ācāryas ; therefore, these latter-day scholars cannot even dream, let alone wish, of finding any lapses or drawbacks in their (commentators') interpretations ; the lessons one has learnt follow them all along without considering their merits and defects. It is the method of teaching that is at fault, not the intelligence of modern scholars ; for, among them, there are many who are endowed with extremely subtle intellectual power. Hence, through the grace of the Sadguru alone, I shall try therefore to demonstrate the flimsiness of the fancied contradictions in the teachings of the ṛṣis and reveal the inmost essence of the śāstras. At the outset therefore it is necessary to give some proof of the fact that our statements regarding the absence of contradictions in the revelations of the ancient ācāryas are not fanciful and do not spring from blind faith (in their teachings).

It has been stated in Śrīmat Bhāgavata, 11.22, that Uddhava had asked Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇā about the reason why the spiritual truths (tattvas) have been ascertained in different ways by different ṛṣis. At this, Śrī Bhagavān had replied in the same manner as we did above. The question and the answer are quoted below:

Uddhava said:



kati tattvāni viśveśa saṁkhyatānṛṣibhiḥ prabho,
navaikādaśa pañca trīṇyāttha tvamiha śuśrūma. (11.22.1)

kecit śadvimśatiṁ prāhurapare pañcavimśatiṁ,
saptaike nava ṣaṭ keciccatvāryekādaśāpare,
kecit saptadaśa prāhuḥ ṣoḍaśa trayodaśa. (11.22.2)

etāvattam hi saṁkhyānāmṛṣayo yadvivakṣayā,
gāyanti pṛthagāyusmannidam no vaktumarhasi (11.22.3)

Uddhava said :—

— Oh Lord! Oh Lord of the Universe! the tattvas have been variously enumerated (counted) by the ṛṣis ; I have heard that these tattvas have been counted by you as nine, eleven, five and three — as twenty-eight in all. (of these, which view is correct?)

(11.22.1)

— some say (the total number of tattvas) it is twenty six in all; some others, say it is seven or nine or six or four; yet others say it is eleven or seventeen ;others again declare that it is sixteen or thirteen.

(11.22.2)

— Oh Long-lived! the reason why the tattvas have been enumerated by the ṛṣis in such a conflicting manner, kindly explain to us.

Śrī Bhagavān said :-

yuktañca santi sarvatra bhāṣante brāhmaṇā yathā,
māyām madīyamudgrhya vadatām kim nu durghaṭam. (11.22.4)

naitadevaṁ yathāttha tvam yadahaṁ vacmi tattathā,
evaṁ vivadatām hetuḥ śaktayo me duratyayāḥ. (11.22.5)

yāsām vyatīkarādāsīd vikalpo vadatām padam,
prāpte śamadame'pyeti vādastamanu śāmyati. (11.22.6)

parasparānupraveśāt tattvānām puruṣarṣabha,
paurvāparyaprasaṁkhyānam yathāvakturvivakṣitam. (11.22.7)

ekasminnapi drśyante praviṣṭānītarāṇi ca,
pūrvasmin parasmin vā tattve tattvāni sarvaśaḥ. (11.22.8)

paurvāparyamato'miṣām prasaṁkhyānamabhīpsatām,
yathā viviktaṁ yadvaktraṁ grhnīmo yuktisambhavāt. (11.22.9)

anādyavidyāyuktasya puruṣasyātmavedanam,
svato nā sambhavādanyastattvajño jñānado bhavet. (11.22.10)

Śrī Bhagavān said :—

— Whatever the ṛṣis who realized the Brahman have said — all this is right; all these views are in harmony with one another, there is really no contradiction. Whatever has been said by each one of them in accordance with my Māyā is correct. (11.22.4)

— “the truth of the matter is not what you are saying; what I am telling you is the truth”— it is my power of insurmountable avidyā (ignorance) that is the driving force behind these persons who hold antagonistic views. (in other words, these contentious persons are subject to avidyā, and thus mistaken). (11.22.5)

— Owing to divergences among these powers differences of views, which are the cause of these antagonisms, appear; when they are endowed with “śama” (serenity of mind) and “dama” (self-control) these differences disappear and the antagonism too is dispelled. (11.22.6)

Oh the great among the Puruṣas (Uddhava)! Owing to the interpenetration of the tattvas with one another and in accordance with the intention of the ṛṣis who spoke about them differences have appeared in the sequence and number of the tattvas. (In other words, the intentions of the ṛṣis, which depends on the nature of the query and competence of the listener,— it is in accordance with this that the subsequent tattva (effect) having been included in the preceding tattva (the cause), instead of showing the tattva as the effect as something different they have included it in the preceding tattva which is the cause ; sometimes, on the other hand, owing to the inherence of the cause in

the effect, they have also expressed it in a reverse order ; hence in the enumeration of the tattvas and the sequence among them differences have occurred.)

(11.22.7)

— (on a close examination of their teachings) It becomes clear that everywhere, in the preceding tattva (the cause) or the subsequent tattva (the effect) the other (the cause or the effect) tattva has been included.

(11.22.8)

— hence the ways in which they have stated the sequence and the number of the tattvas,— all these we accept as true, for they are all in accordance with reason.

(11.22.9)

—Knowledge of the self cannot come to one who is subject to avidyā that goes back to the beginning of creation. Hence the other kind of man (who is free from the fetters of avidyā) in their case becomes the knowledge-giver guru. (you should know the knowledge-giver guru, therefore, as free from avidyā and infallible).

(11.22.10)

The present-day scholars imagine that there exists the greatest divergence between the teachings of Maharṣi Kapila, the author the Sāṃkhya-sūtras and those of Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, the author of the Brahmasūtras. And yet, in the Bhagavadgītā, Vedavyāsa has himself mentioned in clear terms, Maharṣi Kapiladeva as the supreme among the "siddhas" (spiritually accomplished persons) in the form of Divine utterance. In Chapter X of the Bhagavadgītā, Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, while describing His greatest Divine manifestations (vibhūti), has said in śloka twenty-six : "siddhānām kapilo muniḥ" which means that He is manifested in Kapila muni, the greatest among the siddhas. Śrīmat

Shankarāchārya has, in his own commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, explained this part of the śloka in this manner : “siddhānām janmanaiva dharmajñānavairāgyaiśvaryātiśayaṁ prāptānām kapilo muniḥ” — “Kapila muni, who is the greatest among those who are from their very birth, endowed with dharma, jñāna, vairāgya (non-attachment) and supernatural powers is a manifestation of my Divine Self. Śrīdhara Svāmī in his commentary on the Gītā too has explained this in the same way, for instance : “siddhānām utpattitaḥ evādhigataparamārthatattvānām madhye Kapilākhyo munirasmi”—“among those who are from their very birth in full knowledge of the supreme Truth, I am Kapila muni.” In Śrīmad Bhāgavata, in ślokas 3.24.6— 3.24.11 and in ślokas 18 and 19, and also in ślokas 3.25.1, 3.25.2 and 3.25.3, Vedavyāsa has described Maharṣi Kapila as a divine avatāra and set forth very extensively the Sāṁkhya jñāna imparted by Kapila himself in subsequent Chapters. The authority of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā is universally acknowledged and the principal teachings of Sāṁkhya philosophy have been incorporated in the Bhagavadgītā as Divine utterances. In many other texts composed by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa the same kind of honour and glorious tributes are found while referring to Maharṣi Kapila and his teachings. In his commentary (Vyāsa) has remarked at one place “ādividvān nirmāṇa - cittamadhiṣṭhāya kārūṇyāt bhagavān maharṣirāsuraye jijñāsamānāya tantraṁ provāca” (the primal sage, dwelling in the specially created mind (citta) through companion, imparted this tantra (treatise) to Āsuri, the disciple who aspired to know yoga) and in the Mokṣadharma Parvādhyāyas of Śāntiparvan in the Mahābhārata, Vedavyāsa himself has set forth the Sāṁkhya - śāstra revealed by Maharṣi Kapila and mentioned as the knowledge which leads to mokṣa (liberation). Not only Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, but many other ṛṣis, even those who uphold the Īśvara of Vedanta, have mentioned maharṣi Kapila as an avatāra of God Himself. For instance, Vālmīki, in his Ramāyāna, Ādikāṇḍa, in 40.25 śloka says :

te tu sarve mahātmāno bhīmavegā mahābalāḥ,
 dadṛśuḥ kāpilāṁ tatra vāsudevam sanātanam.
 ("kāpilāṁ"= Him who had assumed the form of Kapila) (40.25)

—those exalted, powerful (sons of king Sagara) warriors saw there the sage Kapilā, the eternal Vāsudeva Himself.

There is no need to multiply quotations suffice it to say that the Śruti itself says about Kapiladeva : "ṛṣim prasūtaṁ kapilāṁ yastamagre jñānairbibharti jāyamānañca paśyeta" (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 5.2).²⁵

On close reflection on these matters it is definitely established that Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, the author of the Brahma-sūtras, never regarded Kapila as an incomplete or imperfect knower of Reality, nor did he ever consider his teachings erroneous. Had there been any real contradiction between the revelations in his own compositions like the Brahma-sūtras and the Bhagavadgītā and those of Maharṣi Kapila, Vedavyāsa would never have described Kapiladeva as free from avidyā and as a Divine avatāra ; also, he would never

²⁵ the term kapila here, no doubt can be interpreted as "one whose colour is kapila" (pale yellow) ; nevertheless, that this term kapila may also be interpreted as Kapila muni is clearly known from Vedāntadarśana, 2.1.1 and also from Shankarācārya's bhāṣya (commentary) on it. We find in this bhāṣya, the following statement : "yātu śrutiḥ kapilasya jñānātīśayam pradarśayanti" (the śruti which shows the surpassing knowledge of Kapila) which undoubtedly refers to the śruti that has been quoted above ; for, no other śruti (referring to Kapila) is known. After all, even if this śruti is not accepted the main point remains unaffected.

have accepted with admiration the latter's pronouncements in his own texts. It must therefore be admitted that there is no real contradiction between Vyāsa and Kapila, and if anyone thinks that differences exist it must be said that he has failed to comprehend the real purport of their teachings.

Nevertheless, even if this conclusion seems at first sight to be legitimate, unless one can demonstrate that as a matter of fact, there is full harmony between the teachings of Vedānta-Darśana (Brahma-sūtras) and those of Kapila-sūtras (Sāṃkhya Darśana) the doubts which exist in the minds of all will not be wholly dispelled; for the prevailing notion of modern scholars is that, in his Sāṃkhya - sūtra, Kapila has propounded atheism concerning the existence of God while in the Brahma-sūtra of Vedavyāsa an opposite view has been established. In the Sāṃkhya Darśana the plurality of Puruṣas is admitted while in Vedānta-Darśana an opposite view has been upheld. In Sāṃkhya Darśana the realities of the world has been acknowledged; in Vedānta-Darśana, on the other hand, its illusoriness has been affirmed. There are also many other contradictions. The views held by the Vaiśeṣika Mīmāṃsā and other Darśanas are also full of differences and contradictions among one another. How is it possible to reconcile these extremely opposed views? Hence, it becomes extremely difficult, from noticing the possibilities of unanimity between Vyāsa and Kapila as shown by external evidence, to believe in the absence of contradiction between Sāṃkhya and Vedānta. The existence of actual harmony between the views of various Darśanas must be demonstrated. It is also noted that in India there are various mutually opposed categories of sādhanas holding the views of diverse religious sects like the Śāktas (worshippers of "śakti"—divine power), Śaivas (worshippers of Lord Śiva), Gāṇapatyas (worshippers of Lord Ganesha), Vaiṣṇavas

(worshippers of Lord Viṣṇu). All these diverse views have been introduced and commended by the ṛṣis ; how, then, can these views held by them be harmonised?

But unless a thorough discussion of the Sāṃkhya and the Brahma-sūtra is done it is impossible to grasp the real purport of the teachings imparted in them and if this is not done resolution of differences and establishment of harmony becomes impossible. I propose, therefore, to embark on an elaborate discussion of this matter. However, before this is done we must, at the outset, show that there is such a thing as differences in the capacity and competence (adhikāra-bheda) in regard to the teachings of these various Darśanas.

Here ends the first quarter of the second section entitled "Viṣaya-sūcana (introduction to the subject matter)

OM TAT SAT

Second Quarter of the second Section

An Account of Adhikāribheda and the secret of the various Religious Sects of India.

It has been said earlier that the divergences among the utterances of the ṛṣis have occurred owing to differences in the nature of the questions asked and the competence of the disciple aspiring after knowledge. That the lessons imparted will differ when the subject of inquiry differs is easily understood by all. A little reflection will make it clear that

teachings will vary according to the competence (adhikāra) of the inquisitive disciple. The same question may arise in the mind of a boy and that of an adult person and both of them may ask questions about it to the ācārya; nevertheless, even though the question is the same the wise ācārya never answers them both in the same manner ; for the conceptual power of a boy and an adult person cannot be the same ; hence, the ācārya will impart knowledge only in accordance with the degree of the person's power of comprehension. The ācāryas have classified the competent disciple into these three categories : the highest (uttama), the middle (madhyama) and the lowest (adhama) ; but considering the mental make-up and nature of the disciples and ascertaining, at the very outset, who is competent to comprehend which kind of śāstra, they (the ācāryas) have varied their teachings according to the respective capacities— the highest, the middle, the lowest— of the recipients. It is necessary therefore to discuss at length this matter of differences in adhikāra (competence and capacities).

The Ācāryas divided human beings at large into three categories: jīvas in bondage (baddha), jīvas aspiring after liberation (mumukṣu) and those who are liberated (mukta). He who regards his body as his self and hence attached to the pleasures caused by sense enjoyments, is regarded as “baddha” (in bondage). It is this self-identification with the body and the force of desire generated by this that has been called by the ṛṣis “avidyā” (ignorance). The term “baddha” is generally used in the sense of “bound by this avidyā”. He who, after reflecting on the inevitable states of the jīva like birth, old-age and death has conceived this Saṃsāra (world of phenomena) as full of sorrows and hence has become distrustful and averse to the pleasures caused by sense enjoyments and material prosperity regarding them as insignificant and transient and in whose heart naturally the thought as to how to liberate himself from the onslaught of sufferings and sorrows forever

has become a settled mental habit and who, by listening to the teachings (upadeśa) of the Sadguru has come to know that the Ātman is separate from the body and thus become eager to get rid of self-identification with the body (dehātmabuddhi)— is (to be regarded as) "mumukṣu". God (Īśvara) alone is the controller, dispenser and Lord of this entire Cosmos ; the jīva is by nature subject and subordinate to Him and (thus) bereft of freedom ; he who has developed such a conviction and hence, becoming regardless of his own happiness and distress, has naturally turned earnestly solicitous to give up the avidyā which springs from the ego (abhimāna) and whose mind has become naturally drawn to reflect on the nature of the Divine— he too, is regarded as mumukṣu; though however, he is specially characterised as "bhakta". And those who have rid themselves of self-identification with the body permanently and completely, to whom the nature of the Supreme Spirit (paramātmān) has been revealed, who have therefore been established perennially in the Supreme Puruṣa, Paramātmān, for whom nothing remains to be known and attained— it is they who are called "liberated" persons (mukta puruṣa).

The ṛṣis have generally classified "baddha" jīvas into two categories.

Baddha jīvas : ordinary, unregenerate persons and those who are engaged in karma (karmin) or those who follow the path of karma. The man who doesn't follow the Vedas (Śruti), who, by making his own mind his own master and leads his life like other ordinary (nature-bound) people is regarded as an unregenerate, nature-bound (prākṛta) person. Those, again, who-desire, for his own self or for others, happiness of some kind or other in this world or in the other world or in both and yet, do not make their own educated or uneducated intelligence the regulator of their actions in order to attain happiness ; who on the contrary, by subjecting themselves entirely to the injunctions of the Vedas (Śruti) and

the traditional law-giving sacred texts (Smṛti) founded on the Veda engage themselves intelligently in all prescribed actions and by performing all actions enjoined by the Vedas strive to achieve much-coveted happiness and prosperity in this world and, especially, to attain felicitous worlds beyond like the heavens, have been designated "karmins" or "karmamārgins" (those who follow the path of action). The word "karma" has been used in the sense of "karma enjoined by the authors of the śāstras". The term "dharma" too has been usually used in this sense in many places ; those who thus perform prescribed actions have received the appellation "karmin".

Nevertheless, to concentrate our minds on the ritual activities prescribed by the Vedas and to strengthen our attachment to their fruits is not the main purpose of the Vedas. Through good conduct, performance of pious observances, practice of ascetic austerities and ritual sacrifices enjoined by the Vedas, delusive tamas and desire-generating rajas of the mind are gradually diminished and the pure sāttvika tendencies (vṛttis) that spring from knowledge arise and increase. When, in this manner our mental propensities are gradually purified, our desire for mundane enjoyments is weakened; as a result, a man becomes eager to attain mokṣa (liberation). On the other hand, as soon as one begins to lead his life in accordance with the injunctions of the guru and the śāstras, giving up all self-indulgence, "aham-vṛtti", (the egotistical tendencies) one's chief obstacle to liberation, is diminished considerably and one's ability to control the senses is greatly increased ; hence, one's eligibility for the attainment of mokṣa is gradually strengthened. Besides, the felicitous consequences of the actions prescribed by the Vedas are bound to occur; it is also true that they are actually experienced in this very life; nevertheless, it is also the Vedas which tell us that these fruits of actions are transitory and the bliss that comes from mokṣa is infinitely greater; hence, when the mind becomes purified through the

performance of these injunctions of the Vedas, the mind of Man becomes naturally eager for mokṣa and seeing that according to Vedic utterances the gods and goddesses that are worshipped through Vedic mantras and rituals are only portions of the Supreme Lord (parameśvara), the mental predilections of a pure-hearted person naturally flow towards the Lord of All (sarveśvara). To render thus a man finally eager for liberation (mumukṣu) is the ultimate object of Vedic karma-kāṇḍa. In chapter 21 of the eleventh "Skandha" of Śrīmadbhāgavata, it has been stated that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself taught this matter to Uddhava clearly.

phalaśrutiriyam nṛṇām
na śreyo rocanam param,
śreyo vivakṣayā proktā
yathā bhaiṣajyarocanam. (23)

Utpattyaiva hi kāmeṣu
prāṇeṣu svajaneṣu ca,
āśaktamaṇaṣo martyā,
ātmano'nartha hetuṣu. (24)

na tāna viduṣaḥ svārtham
bhrāmyato vṛjināddhvani,
katham yuñjyāt pnasteṣu
tāmstamo viśato budhaḥ. (25)

— There are eulogistic utterances in the Vedas regarding the fruitfulness of Vedic rites, but it is not the purpose of the Vedas to show them as the summum bonum of man. Their intention is only to arouse interest in mokṣa. These eulogies have been uttered only to make us realize that mokṣa is the supreme good. Just as physicians mix palatable juices with medicines to attract the patient, and yet it is not his purpose only to cause pleasure to the patient by offering the latter sweet, juicy substances, so it is the purpose of the Vedas to offer fruits like enjoyment in heavens; the real intention is to make one's mind turn in the direction of mokṣa. (23)

— Ever since their birth, the jīvas become naturally attached to life and their near and dear ones like sons and wives that are the cause of their own mischief. (24)

— These persons who are ignorant about their real good, who are drifting along the stream of sorrow and plunged in deep darkness— if such persons take to the road indicated by the Vedic path, how can the omniscient Vedas engage them again in the aforementioned objects of desire? (25)

Now for the classification of the mumukṣus in diverse categories.

Just as the performer of prescribed actions who is desirous of their fruits can be called "karmin" so a person who is "mumukṣu" can be called a yogin. It is necessary at the very beginning to understand the essential difference between a "karmin" and a "yogin". It is owing to the connection between the senses and the external objects that happiness and distress result (as their fruits); it is these fruits in the form of joy and sorrow that philosophers and sages have called "bhoga" in relation to the jīva. Towards bhoga in the form of pleasure the jīva generally has a natural predilection while for the avoidance of pain or sorrow he has a natural aversion. The process as to how one can get the desired happiness and avoid misery has been stated in the karma-kāṇḍa of the Vedas, as has

been said earlier. Those who, by adopting this Vedic path or process devote themselves to obtain their coveted bhoga are called "pravṛtti-mārgins" (those who follow the path of natural inclination— towards self-enjoyments). The natural tendencies of their minds rush towards external objects; hence the people who are "pravṛtti-mārgins" have their minds turned outwards external objects (bahirmukhin). Those however, who have naturally become devoid of desire, partly or wholly, towards the objects for their sense-enjoyments and whose natural mental propensities, without rushing towards external objects for enjoyment, spontaneously flow in the direction of reflection on the self or meditation on Parabrahman, hence, by following the path indicated by the all-seeing ṛṣis of old are trying whole-heartedly to still the outward-turning tendencies of the mind and sincerely striving to realize the Self or Parabrahman can be called "nivṛtti-mārgins" (those who follow the path of abstention or withdrawal). Hence, the "karmins" are those who follow the path of "pravṛtti" and the "mumukṣus" are those who follow the path of "nivṛtti". It is the one who follows the path of nivṛtti is called a "yogin". The differences between the "yogin" and the "karmin" should be understood as an innate and natural (temperamental) difference. In the minds of many there may arise a momentary desire for the experience of the self or Parabrahman ; but in actual practice this momentary desire disappears at the onslaught of outward-turning propensities; such momentary desire, therefore, does not determine one's "adhikāra" (capacities or competence). For he in whom this desire becomes so strong that, by removing all desires for sense enjoyments from his mind, he continuously strives to perform acts that are in accordance with the teachings of "nivṛtti-mārga", and it is only he, whose mind constantly remains in a state of disquiet till the attainment of the Self or Parabrahman, is considered fit to become a yogin by taking to the path of nivṛtti; on the other hand, a person who is momentarily driven by such a desire is not considered competent. It is with reference to this permanent, settled condition (of the mind) that Śrī

Bhagavān (The Blessed Lord) has said in the Bhagavadgītā : “jijñāsurapi yogasya śabda brahmātivartate.” (“Even he who has a desire to know the nature of yoga has got beyond the Vedas - Śabdabrahman”.)

The mumukṣu has been called a yogin. This yoga is threefold : 1. Karma-yoga 2. Jñāna-yoga, 3. Bhakti-yoga. Accordingly, the yogins too are divided into three categories. One kind of yogins have competence (adhikāra) in karma-yoga ; the other kind have competence in jñāna-yoga while the third kind have competence in bhakti-yoga. It is necessary now to describe in detail these three kinds of yoga. It should however be known at the outset that when karma-yoga is performed thoroughly and mastered, the sādḥaka, according to divergences in his innate character and temperament becomes eligible for jñāna-yoga or bhakti-yoga.

First, Karma-yoga — performance of prescribed karmas without desire for their fruits—that is the first stage of karma-yoga. How karma can be done without desire for its fruits is now being illustrated with an example ; it is necessary to understand this thoroughly. “Do not kill living creatures; slaying living creatures unlawfully (without śāstric sanctions) makes one liable to punishment in hell” — this prohibitory order has been pronounced by both the Śrutis and the Smṛtis. There are some who abstain from killing creatures in order to avoid torment in hell. “Treat any guest who happens to come to you with loving care and offer him food; he who does this will go to heaven and be happy there”— this injunction has been enjoined by both the Śrutis and the Smṛtis. In order to obtain happiness in heaven, some persons piously observe this devoted service to guests. Hence this karma (service to guests) being performed with an eye to the eulogistic statements mentioning the consequence of injunctions as well as prohibitions, the

performers of these karmas are regarded as karmins who aspire after the fruits (of these karmas); they are not yogins. Some other persons, on the other hand, may perform these karmas in the conviction that the śāstric injunctions and prohibitions are obligatory, without taking particular notice of the consequences of these. "The Vedas are divine revelations and the actions prescribed by the Smṛtis which follow them are obligatory" ; he who performs actions only in this spirit without paying much attention to any particular results is a yogin. He who observes all these injunctions and prohibitions prompted by only a sense of duty has been established in karma-yoga. In śloka 18.9 of the Bhagavadgītā, the Blessed Lord has described this first stage of Karma-yoga:

kāryamityeva yat karma
 niyataṁ kṛyaterjuna ;
 sangam tyaktvā phalaṁ caiva
 sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ.

— (Oh, Arjuna! When one performs prescribed karma, giving up all attachment to karma and desire for its fruits, prompted only by a sense of duty the renunciation (tyāga) is called "sāttvika".)

Here what has been recommended is the performance of karma without desire for the fruits thereof and attachment to the (prescribed) karma, and only because of the fact that it has been enjoined by the śhāstras. Even if one renounces desire for these fruits of actions one develops an attachment to the karma itself and as a result karma-saṁskāras (the residual impression left by karma that is done) is generated. This kind of saṁskāra is generated on account of the intelligence being deluded. But this karma- saṁskāra is not produced in whose heart the thought: "it is only the divine command which must be carried

out in my action" is always present, and this is due to the predominance of sattvaguna. It is for this purpose Śrī Bhagavān says in the above śloka: "without desire for the fruits (of actions) and without any attachment to the karma itself you should perform all actions as enjoined by the Divine, prompted only by a sense of duty." The sole purpose of performing karma is to carry out the divine commands as revealed in the Vedas — the karma in itself is nothing ; doing karma in this manner, therefore, is tantamount to renouncement of actions (karma-tyāga). The agent of such karma is therefore not a karmin; even while engaged in karma he is a yogin who has renounced karma.

When karma-yoga of this kind has been mastered the second stage (bhūmi) of karma-yoga is attained. Offering of all karma to Brahman — this is the essential characteristic of this second stage. As one keeps performing prescribed karmas unattached and shorn of all desire for their fruits, a wonderful state of purity of the mind occurs and sattva-guṇa, whose nature is pure knowledge, is increased. Then and then alone does one become really capable of imbibing Brahma-vidyā revealed by the Upaniṣads. Such a pure-hearted person, after receiving "upadeśa" (lessons or teaching) can realize that nobody in this world in any of his acts has any real freedom; impelled by the one divine power all creatures are insensibly driven to perform their own activities ; he then becomes able to conceive that not a single leaf of a tree moves through chance or accident,— not even a single thought can arise in one's mind without cause; all objects and events are ultimately linked with the supreme cause, Parameśvara through the relation of causality and thus the entire Cosmos is filled with divine play (līlā) ; hence, he has absolutely no freedom to perform any act, good or bad ; In all the prescribed acts that he himself performs he is really only an instrument ; so, in this state of mind, whatever prescribed acts the sādha-ka performs, are all really prompted by the Divine. It is performing actions in this spirit that is

called "offering all karma (karmārpaṇa) to Brahman". This is the consummation of karma-yoga and the second stage (of karma-yoga). This subject of karma-yoga as "offering of karma to Brahman" has been mentioned in the Bhagavadgītā in the following words :

mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi
saṁnyāsyādhyātmacetasā,
nirāśīrnirmamo bhūtvā
yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ. (3.30)

yat karoṣī yadaśnāsi
yajjuhoṣi dadāsi yat
yattapasyasi kaunteya
tat kuruṣva madarpaṇam. (9.27)

Again,

cetasā sarva karmāṇi
mayi saṁnyasya mat paraḥ,
buddhiyogamupāśritya
maccittaḥ satataṁ bhava. (18.57)

Īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānām
hṛddeśerjuna tiṣṭhati,
bhrāmyan sarvabhūtāni
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā.

tameva śaraṇaṁ gaccha
sarvabhāvena bhārata
tatprasādāt parāṁ śāntiṁ
sthānaṁ prāpsyasi śāsvatam. (18.62)

— "I am in all respects subject to the Divine, I have no independent existence apart from Him"— thinking in this way offer all your actions to Me and wholly renouncing desire for the fruits of actions and being devoid of all thoughts of being the agent of your actions (the sense of "I am the doer") engage in fight, giving up all regrets. (3.30)

— Oh, Arjuna! whatever work you do, whatever you eat, whatever sacrifice you perform or gifts you make or austerities you perform— all these you dedicate to Me. (9.27)

— by offering Me all your actions with your discriminating intelligence devote yourself wholly to Me (as the Supreme) and by adopting the yoga of Intelligence (Buddhi-yoga) settle your mind in Me. (18.57)

— Oh, Arjuna! Through His power of Māyā, Īśvara, by causing all creatures to turn round as puppets mounted on a machine abides in hearts of all beings. Take refuge in Him O Bhārata, in every way ; then and only then will you, through His Grace, attain the state of supreme, eternal peace. (18.61 and 18.62)

In the first sūtra of the Sādhana Pāda of the Yoga-sūtra, this subject of karma-yoga has been discussed in the following manner.

Sūtra: "tapaḥ svādhyāyeśvarapraṇidhānāni kriyā yogaḥ"

— Tapasyā (practice of austerities), svādhyāya (reading of sacred texts and doing japa of mantras) and Īśvarapraṇidhānāni (offering all karma to Īśvara— all these are included in (what is known as) "kriyā-yoga".

In the Commentary of Vyāsa on this sūtra the term "Īśvarapraṇidhāna" has been explained thus: "Īśvarapraṇidhānaṁ sarvakriyāṇāṁ paramagurāvarpaṇaṁ tatphalasaṁnyāso vā." — By Īśvarapraṇidhāna the offering of all karma to the Supreme Guru Parameśvara or the performance of all karma by wholly renouncing all desire for the fruits (of all actions).

At the first stage (of karma yoga) one only renounces desire for the fruits of actions. At the second stage the sense of oneself being the agent of its actions is abandoned and one feels that God (Īśvara) is the real Agent of all acts. Even if one acts with a desire for the fruits of actions enjoined by the Vedas, the acts, when performed have such a power that by this the mind becomes naturally pure and thus learns to renounce the desire for the fruits (of actions). It is at this stage that karma yoga begins. This is the secret of the teachings of the Āryas. Nevertheless, that the yogin is immeasurably superior to the karmin with a desire for the fruits the Blessed Lord has very clearly stated in the Bhagavadgītā ; He has also in this connection, emphasized in particular the aforesaid distinction between the karmin and the yogin. Take for instance the following verses for illustration :

yāmimām puṣpitām vācam
pravadantya vipaścitaḥ,
vedavādaratāḥ pārtha
nānyadastīti vādinaḥ. (2.42)

kāmātmānaḥ svargaparā
janmakarma phalapradām,
kriyāviśeṣa bahulām
bhogaiśvarya gatiṁ prati. (2.43)

bhogaiśvarya prasaktānām
tayā'pahṛtacetasām,
vyāvasāyātmikā buddhiḥ
samādhaunavidhīyate. (2.44)

traiguṇya viṣayā vedā
nistraiguṇya bhavārjuna,
nirdvandvo nitya sattvastho
niryogakṣema ātmavān. (2.45)

yāvānārtha udapāne
sarvataḥ samplutodake,
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu
brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ. (2.46)

karmaṇyevādhikāraste
mā phaleṣu kadācana,
mā karmaphalaheturbhur-
mā te sango'stvakarmaṇi. (2.47)

yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi
saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanamjaya
siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā,
samatvaṁ yoga ucyate. (2.48)

Again, 6.44 :

jijñāsurapi yogasya
śabdabrahmāti vartate

Again, in 6.46 :

karmi bhyaścādhiko yogi
tasmād yogī bhavārjuna.

and so on.

— “Apart from ritual acts like sacrifices (yajña) which lead one to results like residence in heaven ; there are no duties for man”— those undiscerning persons who, infatuated by these Vedic utterances use such flowery (apparently fascinating) words, persons who are full of desire, so are exceedingly attached to enjoyments and wealth ; consequently, they regard felicity in celestial realms as the final goal of man ; hence, although the Vedic “Karmakāṇḍa” consisting of an abundance of ritualistic activities (hence hard to perform)

lead to painful rebirth and re-enacting of karma in this world, they recommend for the attainment of our longed-for enjoyments and wealth. In actual fact, however, their minds are deluded by the desire for those enjoyments and wealth; hence, their minds never become firmly convinced and fit for samadhi. (42,43,44)

— O, Arjuna! the Vedas affirm the fruits of actions of people who are driven by desire and dominated by the three guṇas ; shorn of all desires, transcend the guṇas, be free from the pairs of opposites like joys and sorrows ; becoming perpetually still in your mind and free from solicitude in the acquisition and preservation of objects (of this world) be permanently settled in the Ātman . (45).

—The brāhmaṇa who has been established in Brahman has as much need for the Vedas (Vedic Karmakāṇḍa) as a person has for searching after small ponds when the place is flooded all over (he has, that is to say, absolutely no need for them). (46)

— Nevertheless, I am not forbidding you to perform Vedic karma; by all means perform prescribed karma. You should not however have a desire for its fruits; do not be a cause for undergoing the fruits of your karma (bhoga); on the other hand, you should on no account develop an attachment towards forbidden actions: O, Dhanamjaya! becoming free from the sense of a separate existence from the Supreme (Parameśvara) be equal-minded towards success and failure in your actions and free from all attachment to karma; it is this equal-mindedness (towards success and failure) that is called "yoga".

(47-48)

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—..... he who has become desirous of knowing the secret (principle) of Yoga is able
to get beyond the Vedas. ("Śabdabrahma"). (6.44)

* * * * *

—..... the yogin is superior to karmin ; so become a yogin, O, Arjuna. (6.46)

These two kinds of Karma-yoga that have just been mentioned are included in Bhakti-yoga which will be discussed at length later on. Jñāna-yoga, on the other hand, is based on discrimination (viveka) and aversion to worldly objects (vairāgya) ; its ancillary sādhanas will be discussed in detail while expounding the Yoga-sūtra. It is these karmas (sādhanas) which can be described as "Karma-yoga" that is specially a concomitant of Jñāna-yoga. The performance of karmas enjoined by the Vedas for purification of the mind is doubtless obligatory even for the person who follows the path of jñāna (Jñāna-yoga) ; nevertheless, it is necessary at this point to know that he (jñāna-yogin) habitually thinks about the jīvātman as separate and distinct from the body; hence, while performing prescribed acts for self-purification he strives to conceive himself as totally a non-doer and all karmas as functions of the guṇas ; This point will be thoroughly understood on reading the discourse of Jñāna-yoga set forth later on. The jñāna-yogin, even while performing his karmas "does not become attached to them, thinking that it is the guṇas that are operating through the karma" - guṇāguṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate. (Gita 3.28)

Now the difference between the Jñāna-yoga and bhakti-yoga is being discussed. Among persons who are endowed with a spiritually developed intelligence generally two different kinds are found. The mind of one kind (of persons) is synthetic (anvayin), after pondering the subtle essence of various kinds of dissimilar (disparate) objects and actions,

they are able to discern similarity and after finding out this similarity they are able to view apparently unconnected objects and actions as one by designating them with a generic name and searching for a point of resemblance even among these genera they are able to discern unity. The mind of the other kind (of persons) is analytic; such a mind is apt to discern distinctions even in generally observed similarity.

It is those whose minds are analytical are eligible for Jñāna-yoga; such persons are characterized by the capacity for discriminating the ātman (self) from the anātman (not-self); they view the Ātman as distinct from the anātman like the body; this is their habitual nature. The common rung of human beings tend to identify their self with the body; hence their feeling : "I am the doer, I am the enjoyer, I am happy, I am unhappy, I am beautiful, I am ugly, I am ill, I am healthy and so on. But these discriminating persons find after judging things that this sense of identification with the body and the senses is not true in reality. Once I used to regard myself as a boy, then as a young man, then as middle-aged man and finally I have regarded myself or am still regarding myself as an old man; and yet, as a matter of fact, my "I-ness" has remained unchanged all-along; the "I" in the period of my boyhood, the "I" during my youth, my middle age and my old age— it is the same and identical "I" ; true, the states of my boyhood and so on have changed ; and yet, at the back of all these states and as a connecting link between them , "I" have remained always the same. In reality, "I" am only a spectator and enjoyer of all these states; there have been various changes of my condition like illness, good health, happiness and sorrow; it is true that "I" have gone through good and evil actions and diverse streams of thought; and yet through all these experiences, thought and actions "I" have remained, behind all these various states, unchanged, only as a connecting link between them, as a mere spectator (of them). The joys and sorrows I have experienced in the past now seem

to me like a dream; the story of my own joys and sorrows appear to me almost like the story of the joys and sorrows of others; it is no longer able, at this moment, to overcome me. The actions that are performed and the joys and sorrows that are experienced during a dream, seem to me an illusion when I wake up. The past experiences of my life too do not appear more real than these (illusions). Just as "I", remaining behind all these experiences and actions, stayed as a connecting link between them and a mere spectator (of them) so, I realize now that in relation to my past actions in my waking life too "I" was no more than a mere spectator. Hence, the happiness and the misery, the actions and non-actions—all these are as illusory as a dream in relation to me. The various states of my life, like my boyhood, for instance, are not, in reality, a disrupter of my "I"-ness. They are only changes in the state of my body. Every thing in my body is changing everyday; yet, "I" remain the same; hence, "I" am separate from this physical body. Again, I find that during my state of dreamless sleep (suṣupti) or fainting my mind and senses merge in me; they cease to have any function then. Moreover, a particular mental or sensory phenomenon is followed by another, and then another; these phenomena are perpetually changing. And yet, even by this, my "I"-ness is undergoing no change at all. "I", staying all the time at the back of them remain as their percipient or cognizant. At the time of occurrence of these states "I" regarded them as one with myself; now that these states have passed, I no longer feel them as my very self; the story of those events of my past and the story of the present happiness and distress and the mental and sensory phenomena of others have become the same to me; at the time of the occurrence of those events, therefore, with which I had identified myself now appear to me as illusory as a dream and a mere delusion. Again I see that my self-sense—on account of which I regard the states of my body, my senses and mind as my "own", has, as the connecting link between these states, remained all the time behind them. Is this self-sense, then, my real

self? No, even that is not the case. For, this self-sense (which is designated as "ahamikā", "I"-ness or "asmitā", "I am"-ness) — that too is knowable to me; it remains, that is to say, as an object of my cognition. Even this "I-ness" (ahamikā) is a kind of knowledge; just as my knowledge perceives an external object, so does it this self-sense of mine; and like my mind and my senses during dreamless sleep (suṣupti) and during a swoon, this self-sense too is seen to dissolve; what remains then is only a state of ineffable knowledge and bliss. Nevertheless that state is devoid of self-sense; when I wake up this self-sense too is aroused.*²⁶ It must be concluded therefore, it is only the state of pure knowledge

²⁶ According to the innate nature of jīvas, sleep is of these kinds: sāttvika, rājasika and tāmasika. "Tāmasika" nidrā (sleep) occurs in a person whose nature is dominated by tamas; at the time of this kind of sleep a person becomes unconscious like dead-matter (jaḍa) ; this "tāmasika" sleep can be broken only by a great deal of effort. The sleeping person at that time has almost no manifestation of knowledge ; after waking up the awakened person feels extremely sluggish ; the body seems exceedingly heavy and he finds it difficult to move; this sluggishness gradually disappears through effort and he feels normal and fit after sometime. He does not feel that he had even the faintest knowledge during sleep. This is the sign of tāmasika sleep. When a person with a rājasika nature becomes extremely tired may experience tāmasika sleep when over-powered by the force of tamas. But they never become as heavily sluggish as persons with a tāmasika nature. Nevertheless, persons with a rājasika nature generally experience sleep of the rājasika type. This kind of sleep is not like "tāmasika" nidrā; its density is disturbed by dreams; some stream of thought disturbs, mildly or strongly, the density of sleep through dreams. After the sleep is broken, the awakened person, therefore, gets up, shaking off indolence ; but he feels hot in the head and his mind is unpleasant. Sāttvika sleep is very light and pleasant. This kind of sleep cannot be experienced by persons who are excessively thought-ridden and filled with desire for worldly objects. Those whose minds are pure and steady, who are not excessively given to thoughts about things of this world— it is only to such that this kind of sleep comes easily. When this kind of sleep is broken the awakened person does not feel the slightest sluggishness, his body feels extremely light and he experiences great placidity in his mind. When this sāttvika sleep goes on uninterruptedly and it is then that the ego-sense of the sleeping person dissolves and he is immersed in pure knowledge and bliss that is independent of any object. On waking up, some residual remnant of that knowledge and bliss lingers and the

persisting at the back of the ego-sense acts as a connecting link between various states of the latter.*²⁷ Hence, the egoistic function of self-sense, "manas", the senses and the physical body—all these are distinct from the real "I". To such a discerning person it also appears, after subtle analysis, that the function of only pure knowledge which persists at the back of all these (phenomena), — "I" exist as a spectator even of this, as a separate entity; for knowledge cannot experience itself; it is subject to increase or decrease and it is changeable. Hence, the "Puruṣa" as a spectator, who is standing constantly at the back of this knowledge is my real self; the Śruti as well as the infallible ṛṣis too have affirmed this.

The reflective process of discovering the real nature of this Puruṣa as distinct from the pure intelligence (buddhi), ahaṁkāra (ego-sense), manas (mind), the senses and the physical body is called "ātmānātmaviveka" (discrimination between the self and the not-self). Rendering this viveka (discrimination) uninterrupted and constant is what is known as "Jñāna-yoga". He in whose mind this reflective process has become settled and permanent is perpetually and naturally averse to all mundane affairs; he has genuine realization of the evanescence and the insignificance of our joys and sufferings; he is constantly devoted to the contemplation of the real nature of the Ātman, and his intelligence being extremely fine he is able to dissociate and separate the element of the not-self from the self. Such a person alone is eligible for real Jñāna-yoga and it is this

ego-sense having arisen at that time he feels that he experienced joy while asleep. Even those who are rājasika by nature may experience such blissful sleep in some measure whenever sāttvika propensities arise.

²⁷ It is this pure state of knowledge, free from all ego-sense that has been defined as undefiled sattva-guṇa in Sāṁkhya Philosophy. It is this that philosophers of the Sāṁkhya school of thought have called "Buddhi" or "Mahat-tattva" or the chief function of the "Mind-stuff" (antaḥkaraṇa).

unremitting effort to know the Ātman as separate from the not-self (anātman) that is called Jñāna-yoga. Through this (Jñāna-yoga) the jñāna-yogin, by realizing finally the Puruṣa as the spectator, separate even from the aforesaid function of pure knowledge becomes liberated from bondage. However, analysis of this kind does not come to a person who is attached to enjoyment of worldly objects. The inevitable sorrows and suffering that spring from the saṁsāra cause a natural aversion towards worldly objects in some persons. This aversion to the world is above all, the generator of Jñāna-yoga. Seeing the transitory nature of all worldly enjoyments and finding this saṁsāra (world) full of sorrows and sufferings, the reflection as to how to escape from this arises naturally in the minds of some people. For a person possessing such a manner of judging and such an aversion to the world (vairāgya) the afore-mentioned Jñāna-yoga alone is congenial. His buddhi is conformable to Jñāna-yoga alone. "What is the relation between this instrument of bhoga, the body and myself? Why do I experience joys and sorrows? How can I liberate myself fully from this pain and suffering? What is my real, essential nature?" — such reflections naturally arise in the heart of such a person, and this is the index of eligibility for Jñāna-yoga. Even without the experience or contemplation of suffering and distress, if the mind is refined by the study of the śāstras, the afore-mentioned person endowed with an analytical intellect may become eligible for Jñāna-yoga. Being devoted to the Ātman he becomes naturally averse to worldly enjoyments. As a matter of fact, in whatever manner it may be, unless one develops an intense aversion towards objects of enjoyments one cannot become competent for Jñāna-yoga.

Those thinkers who possess a synthetic intelligence apprehending causal connections in the midst of diversities in the world and an uninterrupted, reciprocally useful relation among one another is able to conceive the entire Cosmos as subject to One Controller

and as only a Play (līlā) of the One Divine, as a manifestation of the one Brahman. Hence, the Śrutis (Upaniṣadic utterances) regarding this are particularly dear and suitable for them. These excellent human beings conceive the entire Universe as the body of Īśvara and all jīvas as particular powers of the One Divine, and so they devote themselves to the worship (of the divine) which consists in the contemplation of the entire Cosmos, moving as well as immobile, as only Divine līlā (play), and thus their conception regarding this matter becomes so firm and steady that their feeling of separation from the Divine in the form of the ego (aham) naturally disappears. Having attained this state they, after receiving parābhakti (supreme bhakti) which is supreme love for the Divine become eligible for real Parābhakti Yoga. After attaining this Bhakti-yoga they are finally merged in Parabrahman and become one with Him in His essential nature (svarūpa). The "mukti" (liberation) the jñāna-yogins attain by realizing the nature of the Puruṣa (Ātman)—the same mukti comes naturally to these yogins who follow the path of bhakti

In śloka 18.54 and 18.55 of Śrīmat Bhagavadgītā, Śrī Bhagavān has described the competent recipient of bhakti-yoga and the final outcome of it thus :

brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṃkṣati,
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
madbhaktim labhate parām.

(18.54)

bhaktyā māmabhijānāti
yāvān yaścāsmi tattvataḥ,
tato mām tattvato jñātvā

viśate tadanantaram.

(18.55)

— The person who is established in the knowledge of identity with Brahman and therefore blissfully serene in the mind never grieves, never long for anything; he becomes equal-minded towards all creatures and in that state attains the highest (parā) bhakti in Me (the Divine). Through this bhakti he is able to know fully and essentially my real nature which transcends this cosmos and divine powers like Omnipresence and Omnipotence. Then, knowing Me in my essential nature he enters my very Being, that is, attains Me in my essential nature.

(18.54, 18.55)

The nature of this Parā-bhakti will be described later on. Now it is only the natural competence for it has been pointed out. This, however, is the indication of the highest stage of Bhakti Yoga and the highest capacity for it. Before obtaining this competence (adhikāra) the karma-yoga or Kriyā-yoga that is necessary — that too is generally characterized as bhakti-yoga. The two stages of this karma yoga have been mentioned before. They are: the first state which consists in the renunciation of the fruits of action and the second stage which is offering all karma to Brahman. It is when the sādḥaka is fully established in this second stage (of karma yoga) that he acquires the capacity for attaining Parābhakti-yoga. To distinguish Parābhakti from the bhakti which accompanies karma-yoga the latter (and lower) form of bhakti has been called by the ṛṣis “vaidhī-bhakti” or “sādhana-bhakti” and “niṣkāma bhakti”. The devoted performance of actions enjoined by the śāstras which embody divine commands without an eye for the fruits thereof and only for the pleasure of the Divine— this is what is designated vaidhī-bhakti or sādhana-bhakti. This is the first stage of karma-yoga. Nevertheless, the practioner of this kind of

bhakti-yoga has the sense of distinction (from the Divine) and, though he is devoid of all other desires in relation to himself, the desire to cause pleasure to God still remains. But at the second stage of karma-yoga which consists in the offering of all karma to Brahman, there being no feeling of "I-am-the-doer" and all actions having been offered to Brahman, the bhakti of the performer of actions of this kind can be described as pure niṣkāma (desireless) bhakti. However, both these two kinds of bhakti are only a means (sādhana) to Parā-bhakti; hence the reason that sādhana-bhakti and niṣkāma-bhakti both are mentioned in many places as sādhana bhakti, and this will be done in this book too. It is evident therefore that bhakti yoga is of two kinds : (1) Parābhakti yoga and (2) Sādhana-bhakti yoga (this second karma-yoga is in consonance with bhakti-yoga).

Those who desire the fruits of actions and wish to obtain desired objects by performing all actions without license and self-indulgences in accordance with the śāstras, believing that the statements in the śāstras are divine utterances (or sanctioned by the Divine) : they too have been mentioned as "bhakti-mārgins" (followers of the path of bhakti) in some śāstras. For, on account of their love for the Divine, they abjure all licence in the matter of enjoyment of desired objects and it is only by carrying divine commands that they wish to enjoy desired objects. In the śāstras, it is true, the worship of gods like "Indra" has been mentioned; nevertheless, that these deities are only special powers of the Supreme God has been repeatedly stated in the śrutis; so the coveted pleasures and prosperities that these deities bestow on them, they accept as God-given. By the acquisition of various objects for enjoyment through the performance of prescribed acts their love for the Divine is greatly increased. Thinking about the great compassion of Him who bestows such objects for enjoyment and who has revealed through the śāstras such unailing means for the acquisition of longed-for enjoyments, their love for the Divine is

considerably intensified; as a result, their desire for mundane pleasures also dwindles and bhakti towards the giver of these pleasures dominates their minds. Finally, without paying attention to the good or evil consequences of actions they begin to perform prescribed actions in a spirit of obedience to divine commands, solely with a view to receiving divine pleasure; thus gradually, they are raised to the status of yogins and with their love (for the Divine) intensifying by degrees, they gradually attain Parābhakti-yoga and at last become merged in Parabrahman. When such a love for the Divine is generated, even a person acting for desire (sakāma) may become capable of attaining liberation while alive (jīvanmukti); thus even the "sakāma bhakta" (devotee with desire) has been described as bhakti yogin in sacred texts like Śrīmadbhāgavata. "However, when worshipped according to shāstric injunctions Gods like Indra bestow enjoyments like (residence in) the heaven"—it is those whose minds are attracted by Vedic pronouncements of this kind and those who, owing to the sense of dualism, are incapable of worshipping these gods as Brahman have been characterized in Śrīmadbhāgavata as karmayogins. There is no real difference in such a description; it is only a difference in language. The karma-yoga that has been mentioned as the initial stage of pure Parābhaktiyoga and the worship of God with desire—both these have been regarded, for reasons mentioned before, as included in bhakti-yoga while those sakāma karmins who worship the gods with a dualistic attitude have been regarded as karmayogins belonging to a special category by themselves. Take, for instance, the following words uttered by the Blessed Loved to Uddhava in Śrīmadbhāgavata (11.20)

yogāstrayo mayā proktā

nr̥ṇām śreyovidhitsayā,

jñānamkarma ca bhaktiśca

nopāyo'nyo'sti kutracit.

(6)

nirvinnānām jñānayogo

nyāsināmiha karmasu,

teṣvanirvinna cittānām

karmayogastu kāminām.

(7)

yadṛchhayā matkathādaḥ

jātaśraddhaśca jaḥ pumān,

na nirvinno nātisakto

bhaktiyogo'sya siddhidaḥ

(8)

— For the ultimate spiritual well-being of men I have taught three kinds of yoga : jñāna, karma and bhakti ; apart from these there is no other way of attaining blessedness. Those who are averse to worldly enjoyments and therefore abstain from actions that beget them, have competence in jñāna-yoga. Those who have not developed any aversion (vairāgya) to worldly enjoyments, who on the other hand, crave for mundane pleasures, are eligible for karma-yoga. The person who has developed a natural love for discourses concerning Myself, who do not have an excessive aversion towards the world and yet not excessively attached to matters (viṣaya) — for him bhakti-yoga becomes fruitful.

(6,7,8)

In the Bhagavadgītā however, it has been said that "karma-yoga" begins with action without desire for its fruits while actions performed with desire for its fruits has been called simply "karma"; here these words have always been used in accordance with this. There is, in this, no fundamental difference.

(6) In some sacred texts like Nārada-pañcarātra it is only the jñāna-yogin who has been characterized "mumukṣu", and both followers of parābhakti-yoga and sādhanabhakti-yoga have been called "bhakta" ; here also, the difference is only one of language, not of essence. It has been shown earlier that the follower of the path of bhakti (bhakti-mārga) does not, like the jñāna-yogin concern himself with judging whether relations with mundane matters should be maintained or abandoned ; it is love towards the Divine and reverence for Him that constitutes the motive force ; consequently, he does not embark upon his sādhana, actuated directly by a desire for liberation (mukti) ; it is for this reason that instead of being called mumukṣu (desirous of liberation) he may be characterized only a "bhakta". Nevertheless, just as the jñāna-yogin has no desire for worldly enjoyments but is ever solicitous for realizing the nature of the Ātman that is beyond the phenomenal world including the body, so, bhakti-yogin too, turns away from all mundane pleasures for himself and is eager to realize the ultimate cause of all causes, Paramātmān; in this respect the state (of mind) of both is very much alike ; hence, keeping this in mind both are characterized as "mumukṣu" in many other texts, since they are both firmly set on the level of the mumukṣu. There is, in reality, no difference of opinion on this.

It has been already said that jñāna-yoga is essentially based on "vairāgya" and "ātmānātmaviveka". The karma-yoga that is in consonance with this has eight constituent elements : yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi; of these, samādhi is the main. The other seven elements are only preliminaries to this samādhi. Through samādhi the impurities of the mind are removed and gradually discrimination between the Self and not-self (ātmānātmaviveka) is fully established. It is only when this "viveka" (discrimination) is established that real jñāna-yoga begins. This yoga has been specifically dealt with in the Yoga-sūtra of bhagavān Patañjali. The

principles of jñāna-yoga have been specially discussed in the Sāṃkhya Philosophy. Hence, the philosophers refer to jñāna-yoga as "jñāna" or "Sāṃkhya" and characterize bhakti-yoga as simply "bhakti". These matters will be thoroughly discussed at a later stage. It is mentioned at this point only to show the difference in language. This difference in language is not in the least due to any real contradiction in the statements of the ṛṣis.

The sādhana-bhakti and the Parābhakti that have been spoken about so far, are only for the person of the highest (spiritual) capacity. But persons of such a high order of competence (adhikārin) are extremely rare. Very few persons are capable of contemplating the entire Universe as one ; even though many persons may accept this as a valid inference through argument, but to apprehend unity in the midst of this diversity in actual practice is very difficult. The Blessed Lord says in the Bhagavadgītā :

vidyāvinaya sampanne

brāhmaṇe gavi hastini,

śuni caiva śvapāke ca

paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ.

(5.18)

Again :

sādhuṣvapi ca pāpeṣu

samabuddhirviśiṣyate.

(6.9)

— The jñānin sees with an equal eye, a learned and highly disciplined brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant or even a dog or an outcaste.

(5.8)

—Equal-mindedness towards the saint and the sinner—that is the highest attitude of mind.

(6.9)

However, many can comprehend through argument that when the Creator is One no one is really free; all are instruments in the hands of that One Lord; in this sense therefore, the sinner and the saint are equal. But to arrive at such a conclusion through argument and to attain such equal-mindedness towards all are not the same thing. On seeing the vast Cosmic Form of the Divine Lord even "Śrīmannaradeva" Arjuna (Arjuna was the great ṛṣi Nara in his previous birth) was completely bewildered. It follows that very few persons are capable of meditating on the all pervading Cosmic Form of Brahman, and very few people possess the capacity for contemplating every object and every person as a portion of the Divine and every action as a divine act. The Blessed Lord has said in Chapter 7 of the Bhagavadgītā :

manuṣyāṇāṃ sahasreṣu
kaścid yatati siddhaye,
yatatāmapī siddhānām
kaścinmām vetti tattvataḥ. (7.3)

caturvidhā bhajante mām
janāḥ sukṛtino'rjuna,
ārto jijñāsurartharhī
jñānī ca bharatarṣabha. (7.16)

udārāḥ sarva evaite
jñānī tvātmaiva me matam,
āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā
māmevānuttamām gatim. (7.18)

vahūnām janmanā mante

jñānavān mām prapadyate,

vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti

sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ.

(7.19)

— Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for “siddhi” (spiritual success). Even among those who have achieved success through earnest effort, few can know Me as I really am.

(7.3)

— There are four kinds of virtuous men who worship Me, O Lord of the Bharatas!(Arjuna) : those who are in distress, those who aspire after Knowledge, those who ask for needed objects and the jñānin.

(7.16)

—All these are noble persons (since they all love to worship Me). But it is the jñānin who is dear to Me as My very self ; for that man with full control over himself has wholeheartedly resorted to Me, the supremely precious of all objects to be attained by man.

(7.18)

— But even such a jñānin (person who has attained knowledge) attains Me, after many births (many lives devoted to spiritual effort— sādhana), being fully established in the knowledge that “This entire Cosmos, with all its moving and immovable objects, is Vāsudeva” (the Divine) ; such exalted beings are exceedingly rare.

(7.19)

From the characteristics of jñānin that have been (mentioned in śloka 16) stated in Chapter 7 of the Bhagavadgītā, it becomes clear that he is an adept in analysing Vedantic concepts and a niṣkāma bhakta ; this is why the Blessed Lord has described him as extremely dear to Him in śloka 18. The siddhas who have been mentioned in śloka 3— the

jñānin is a thousand times superior even to them. But in śloka 19, the Blessed Lord says that after many lives (births) devoted to bhajana the jñānin is able to conceive the entire Universe of moving and immobile objects as "Vāsudeva", the supreme Divine. It must therefore be admitted that the afore-mentioned adhikārin of the highest bhakti-yoga is exceedingly rare. Nevertheless, there are many such persons whose nature is full of bhakti; they have no inclination for jñāna-yoga, which involves dry and difficult argumentative discourses, and they are not skilful in these. For the spiritual well-being of such persons God has descended on earth in every age, assuming Forms created through Yoga. These Forms of His are naturally perfect; these Divine Forms have indeed such an intrinsic power that if they are held firmly in the heart as objects of meditation through no matter what reason, they (these divine Forms) liberate the jīva from all kinds of bondage to the world and increase the conceptual power of the person who meditates thus to such an extent that they at last fully attain parābhakti and become at the end merged in Parabrahman. On the one hand, the divine image entering in a visible Form in the heart as an object of meditation rends asunder all fetters of desire and refine the mind; so, on the other hand, the gracious and compassionate God by entering the ears as sacred and unfailingly effective sounds denoting Brahman such as "OM" (praṇava) which, entering the mind as an object of meditation, bring about supreme well being of the sādḥaka. Hence, by adopting the two excellent means—remembering repeatedly the Śabda-brahman like the sacred syllable "OM" and persistent reflection on Brahman as incarnate in the divine Image (vighraha), even the comparatively inferior "adhikārin" achieves the highest spiritual competence (adhikāra) and finally, by following Parabhakti-yoga attains oneness with Brahman. (This matter has been dealt with in greater detail in the Conclusion of this book). God has assumed different divine Forms in different ages that are particularly suited to diverse persons (having different natures and

temperaments). That the Divine incarnated Himself as Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the world of mortals at the beginning of Kali-yuga is universally acknowledged by all sampradāyas (religious communities). This has been clearly stated in the Mahābhārata, Śrīmad Bhāgavata and other Purāṇas. Thus descending on earth in the divine Form of Śrī Rama, God had brought relief to gods and human beings by rescuing the earth from the ogres and demons (rākṣasas). By assuming the divine form of Narasimha He saved Prahlāda by slaying (his father) Hiraṇyakaśipu. Again, by assuming the divine Form of goddesses like Durga and Kālī He relieved the gods by vanquishing the demons. There exist no differences among the various religious sects of India regarding these matters. Moreover, that the God in His divine manifested Forms like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra (Śiva) accomplishes the entire Cosmic process (Creation, Maintenance and Dissolution or withdrawal)—regarding this too there are no differences among the various religious sects. There are some however, who are enamoured of the feminine-Forms of the Divine ; they are known as śāktas (worshippers of śakti— divine power). Some are drawn to male Forms of the Divine ; they are divided among vaiṣṇavas (worshippers of Viṣṇu), śaivas (worshippers of Śiva), gāṇapatyas (worshippers of Ganapati or Ganeśa) and so on. To strengthen the faith of those sādhakas who are characterized by a dualistic outlook, the Purāṇas have been divided into particular categories. Some of these Purāṇas are particularly suited to vaiṣṇavas, some to śaivas and some others to śāktas and so on. In the Purāṇas which are suitable for vaiṣṇavas it is Viṣṇu who has been described as Parabrahman and the ultimate essence of all while all the other deities have been referred to as emanating from Him. In some Purāṇas Mahādeva Rudra (Śiva) alone is Parabrahman from whom the creation and Dissolution of all beings have been explained. In yet other Purāṇas it is the Devī (the supreme Goddess) who has been pronounced Parabrahman from whom all others have originated. This is only meant to intensify the

devoted adherence of the worshippers to their divine object of worship. Nor can this, indeed, be called false utterance ; for the Śruti declares :

“sarvaṁ khalvidam brahma.”

— All this is Brahman ; nothing else exists in this world. He is the sole object of worship and adoration. Hence, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara (Śiva), Śakti and others are all manifestations of Brahman. For ordinary human beings meditation on the unmanifest, formless Parabrahman is impossible; for the mind of ordinary human being is not pure. Generally speaking, Parabrahman who is beyond the subtle atom on the one hand and on the other, transcending the infinitely extended Space (Ākāśa) cannot be an object of meditation for the jīvas ; whenever one tries to think about anything the thought assumes some form or another. Only the person who is endowed with the exalted wisdom (prajñā) generated by samādhi is capable of meditating on the Formless (nirākāra). Paramātmā or Ātman (Puruṣa) cannot be an object of meditation even for them directly ; knowing only that the Ātman is beyond all that can be comprehended by buddhi (the higher intelligence) the yogins who follow the path of Knowledge (jñāna), obliterating all knowledge of objects conceivable by the intellect, keep waiting for the realization of the Ātman (for the revelation of the Ātman). Thus when all activities (operations or phenomena) of the mind are suppressed the Ātman is revealed. Though the sādhana (spiritual process) of the yogin who follow the path of Parābhakti is somewhat different, there is no difference regarding this. Ordinary human beings therefore are capable of worshipping some manifest form or another of the Divine like Viṣṇu, Śiva, Virinchi (Brahmā), Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Durga, Kālī and so on. Hence it is those divine Forms which attract the hearts of the bhaktas as an object of worship that the ṛṣis have recommended for worship and meditation as the all-embracing Brahman and described all other deities as in comparison

to Him, created and less powerful. This is only meant to increase the sādḥaka's devotion to the deity (to be worshipped). When, while performing such upāsanā (worship) the mind of the sādḥaka gets purified and the sense of dualism is dispelled, then all kinds of sectarianism disappear and the real significance of the statements of the ṛṣis is understood²⁸. Here, seeing the existence of diverse religious sects in this country one should not presume the existence of differences of opinions among the ṛṣis.

It is universally acknowledged that the Purāṇas are all composed by Veda-Vyāsa; and yet, in a particular class of Purāṇas, the superiority of a particular kind of upāsanā towards a particular deity have been mentioned. From this it is clearly demonstrated that though the worshipped deities of people of diverse natures are apparently different, there is no essential difference in these.

Persons belonging to various religious sects of India worship their own particular favourite divine images according to their individual capacities and gradually attain competence in more advance states of bhakti-sādhana. Hence, even such worshippers are regarded as followers of the path of bhakti (bhaktimārga) ; they too, according as they are "sakāma" or "niṣkāma" are divided into the two categories of "karmins" and "yogins" ; finally, attaining Parābhakti, they become one with Brahman.

²⁸ The practice of worshipping various idols and (personified) powers as the Divine is current even among the people of other countries belonging to other religions. It has been learnt, for instance, that some Christian Roman Catholic sects worship the images of Jesus Christ as God and that of Mother Mary as the Divine. The followers of Zoroaster worship the Sun as God ; many Buddhists worship the images of Buddha. It must be admitted that through worship of this kind all achieve spiritual progress. There is no doubt, however, that according to differences in the nature and powers of the adorned deity, and the intensity of adoration, the results vary.

However, to understand this matter thoroughly, it is necessary to have some grasp of what the ṛṣis came to know about the nature of the world— the Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution of the manifested cosmos— the nature of jīva and that of the ultimate Reality (Parabrahman). The kind of Knowledge by which these Truths can be known is called Brahnavidyā. In the next two Quarters of section II this Brahnavidyā will be discussed with corroborating evidence (from the śāstras). If Brahnavidyā is thoroughly discussed, contradictions in the philosophical statements of the ṛṣis will no longer be seen. So after explaining Brahnavidyā this matter will again be touched upon in the concluding Chapter of this book.

Here ends the second Quarter of the second section entitled “A Discourse on Differences in Adhikāra”.

OM TAT SAT.

Third Quarter of the second Section Brahnavidyā

“Who I am, what my real nature is, whence I came, what the nature of this visible phenomenal world is, the manner of its creation, continued existence and final dissolution is”— when the ṛṣis in order to know all these matters, plunged themselves in deep, concentrated meditation disembodied (divine) utterances appeared before them and revealed the truths they wanted to know. It is these ethereal revelations that are famous as “Śruti”. Learning these Truths from the Śruti and following the prescribed spiritual

method (sādhana) and thus after fully realizing them, the ṛṣis taught them later to competent disciples and by composing the Purāṇas, the Saṁhitās, the Tantras, the Smṛtis, Itihāsa revealed those truths in form and manner that could be understood by the people at large. Brahmavidyā therefore has to be learnt from sacred texts like Śruti, Smṛtis, Itihāsa and Purāṇas. In order that Brahmavidyā as revealed in the Śrutis, Smṛtis and other texts, may be easily understood the main points are briefly stated below :

1) The One and ultimate cause of this entire Universe is Parabrahman; the manifested Cosmos issues from Brahman ; it is established in Brahman and dissolves in It.

2) Parabrahman, on the one hand, is shorn off all distinctions, all-embracing, wholly non-dualistic and immutable; on the other hand, He is omniscient, omnipotent, the creator, Sustainer and Destroyer (who dissolves the cosmos), Manifest in all forms, the indwelling Spirit and the Controller of all.

3) Just as by carving a block of stone images like those of Kālī, Durga, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Gopāla can be manifested at will and yet, before carving the block of stone in this manner all these figures remain one with and inherent in it; thus, before and after becoming these images are indistinguishable from it (the original block) ; so the Universe too is manifested from Parabrahman; but both before and after manifestation, in all conditions it remains one with Brahman. Just as before being manifested in particular forms (images), these images cannot be separated from one another as distinct entities; they cannot be distinguished by separate names and forms (nāma-rūpa) in that state from its constituent element, the block of stone; nevertheless, all the forms remain inherent in the stone ; so this world too, before being manifested with different names and forms remain indissolubly one in Brahman; the names and forms manifested later also remain inherent in Brahman only, being one with It.

4) Just as the soil on the surface of the Earth becomes transformed into innumerable forms like trees, creepers, shrubs, leaves, flowers and fruits, the bone, flesh and faeces of animal bodies, and again these organic substances of plants and living beings after falling on Earth (when dead) are ultimately transformed into soil and lose their existence as distinct entities, so the objects of this world too, endowed with separate names and forms are manifested from Brahman and after final Dissolution of the Cosmos, losing all distinctive features become established in Brahman-nature as one and non-dual (advaita).

Q :- But, earth (soil) is dead-matter ; leaves, flowers, fruits, flesh, marrow— all these too are dead matter ; hence the transformation of earth into leaves, flowers and so on is possible ; but Brahman is all-Consciousness (caitanya) ; (A) How can Brahman be the material cause of the world? (B) How can the example cited before can be regarded as a good one? ²⁹

Ans : (A) There is no essential difference between (dead) matter and consciousness.

First : Instances taken from the external world are not, in many places indicative of a basic difference between matter and consciousness ; what is now seen as cow-dung or faeces of other animals are often seen, after a few days, to be turned into a mass of tiny living organisms. Even plants are living beings (jīvas) ; they are seen to grow from the Earth. From this it can be inferred that between matter and consciousness (jaḍa and

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To set forth the conclusion regarding Brahnavidyā through arguments is not the intention of this section indeed one cannot arrive at a conclusion regarding supra-sensual matters through arguments alone ; with regard to conclusion about Brahnavidyā the utterances of the Śruti and the all-knowing ṛṣis are the only indisputable authority and it is in strict accordance with this that Brahnavidyā is going to be set forth in this section. These objections are being given any in such a way as to help understand the (settled) conclusions of the śāstras.

cetana) there is at least close relation. Hence, in order to refute the statement of the Śruti and the infallible ṛṣis to the effect that the world originates from Brahman as its material cause (upādāna) the apparent distinction between matter and consciousness cannot be accepted as irrefutable evidence.

Secondly : That the jīva is by nature pure-consciousness is admitted on all hands and is borne out by his natural self-experience. The external world, perceptible through our senses like the eye is known to be dead-matter. Now, if one considers how an external object is perceived it is found that when an external object becomes visually perceptible by a person, the form of that object is first received in his eye ; then, through the sense-channels it goes up to the "buddhi" (mind) of the percipient.³⁰ When, after receiving the form of the external object, it (the buddhi) becomes transformed into that very form, the jīva as the spectator (who is the witness of the buddhi) perceives it. But the external object and its form are both dead-matter. Nevertheless, when this material object is being perceived by the jīvātman, it must be admitted that the jīva-consciousness and this material object are not entirely dissimilar; had they been so, there could not subsist such a relation between them. The image is, after all, a form of the object that is reflected; the substance which receives the image must necessary be capable of holding the form of the object reflected (as an image). But if there is no resemblance between the natural characteristics of the two, it is evidently impossible for an object to assume the form of another. The reason why water or a mirror can receive the reflection of the sun is that there is some resemblance between water and mirror on the one hand and the sun on the other; the sun is a material object having a certain volume; so is water or a mirror; this is why the form of the one can be assumed by the other. Similarly, the reason why the eye

³⁰ How exactly this happens is not be discussed at length at this point; for it is not directly relevant here ; at a later stage this matter will be specifically dealt with.

can receive the image of an external object is that in some respects there is a resemblance between the two. Hence, had there been a radical difference, in all respects, between the visible object and the seeing jīva-consciousness, the visible external object could never be related in any way to the Puruṣa- the spectator. From this line of argument therefore, it can be known that dead matter and consciousness are not essentially and radically different substances.

Thirdly — after a little steady reflection it will become evident that the perception the jīva has in relation to the external object is an integral part of the essential nature of the jīvātman ; it is in other words, not different from the real self of the jīvātman; if perception is said to be inherent in the external object, there exists no difference between dead matter and consciousness. Perception is a characteristic of a conscious being, not of an unconscious substance; it must be admitted therefore that the (act of) perception is intrinsic to the jīva-consciousness. But at the time of (a particular) perception the visible object is included in the (act of) perception; had this been not the case every perception being independent of the visible object, one perception cannot be differentiated from another; in that case all specific (particular) perceptions, therefore, become impossible. Nevertheless, that the jīva has specific perceptions is quite evident. Hence, at the time of perception the visible object must be admitted to be a part of it (perception). Again, the perception is an integral part of the jīva-consciousness; at the time of perception, therefore, the visible external object too becomes an integral part of the jīva-consciousness. (as the Spectator).³¹ The external visible object being thus capable of being intrinsic to the

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It should not however be understood from this that the cosmic "Vijñānavāda" (the doctrine of momentary perceptions) which certain Buddhist philosophers uphold is true. This Vijñānavāda has been refuted specifically at certain points while explaining the Yoga-sūtras. Moreover, it must not be understood from this that consciousness is an attribute of dead matter; this doctrine has been refuted at the end of this

jīva (as the viewer) there is no radical difference between dead matter and consciousness, and the statements of the Śruti to the effect that the material Cosmos has originated from the Conscious Brahman do not in any way run counter to valid inference.

(B) From an analysis of the world of phenomena it is seen that a gross substance always originates from a finer (more subtle) substance. Modern Western men of science also have discovered that all visible material objects are products of an extremely subtle, invisible form of energy called electricity. At the same time, another group of scientists in the same Western world have ascertained that the jīva, by increasing his will-power can produce electricity and are able thus to produce marvellous effects on other people. This scientific technique has become well-known by the names of mesmerism, hypnotism and so on. The technique "vaśīkaraṇa" (the method of exercising control over others through mantras and so on) was extensively cultivated in ancient India; these modern Western techniques are no more than particular forms of "vaśīkaraṇa. By connecting the conclusions of these two groups of western scientists it can be easily inferred that a person endowed with a special power can even create particular objects without taking the

Quarter (pāda) and specially in Sāṃkhya Darśana by means of argument. An external object, during perception, being included in the jīvātman as a part of it, this perception (of the jīvātman) has been characterized as "Pauruṣeya Pratyaya" (the perception by the Puruṣa of something as one with It) in the Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali. In reality, all forms in the world manifested in the past, the future and the present are eternally established in Parabrahman; this has been thoroughly explained by an example at the conclusion of this Quarter. Indeed the Puruṣa as Spectator being a portion of Brahman he only contemplates objects that exist as integral parts of Him; nevertheless, being by his very nature a contemplator of particulars, he (the jīva) perceives that object as well as himself as distinct from Brahman. After going through what has been written later in this Quarter this point will be well understood. To have said therefore that during an act of perception the external object becomes part of the Puruṣa (the Viewer) does not mean that the Puruṣa is subject to change.

help of any external substance, by virtue of his own will-power. If will-power alone can generate electricity and if electricity is the material cause of all other material substances then how can one say that it is impossible that with the increase in one's will-power one may create external objects? Even today there are some who have come across Indian yogins who possess such powers. It has been recorded in the Bible, the sacred Book of the christians that with one piece of bread Jesus Christ had fed a large number of people to their hearts' content. Brahman, the ultimate cause of Cosmic manifestation is omnipotent; that He creates the world by virtue of His own will alone, without any other material is not surprising at all. It cannot therefore be concluded that all this is contrary to reason and logic.

(5) This phenomenal world is constituted by the union of two kinds of forces ; the one is called dead matter (jaḍa); the other is designated "dṛk" meaning seer or spectator (draṣṭṛ). This latter is called "jīva-caitanya" or simply "caitanya" (consciousness) while, the former is characterised "guṇa". This "draṣṭṛ" and dṛśya (the seer and the seen) constitute the world (jagat); there is nothing else (in it). It has already been said that the world issues from Brahman, is established in Brahman and finally dissolves too in Brahman; hence, both jīva the seer and the world, the seen, before being manifested as separate entities remain as one and undifferentiated in Brahman-nature. So, in order to comprehend the essential nature of Parabrahman one should try to think in this way : these two powers of "dṛk" and "dṛśya" exist as indistinguishably one with Him ; neither of them has a separate existence (of its own). This being so there is no distinction between knowledge (jñāna) the knowable (jñeya) or knower (jñātā) in the nature of Parabrahman. Again, there being nothing other than Brahman He is self-complete and free from all dualism; the distinction between the guṇas and the guṇin (attributes and the possessor of attributes), śakti and śaktimān—

power and the possessor of power—even that is absent in Brahman-nature. It is only through some kind of special activity that guṇas become separately manifested and designated this or that (by names); where there is no special activity, no particular manifestation of an object, there is nothing that can be called “guṇa”. In that state the power that manifests itself in visible “matter” is indistinguishable from Brahman; in that state therefore it does not exist as matter (that is, as an object seen by the jīva) it exists, on the contrary, as Brahman. What that form (state) is like cannot be described in words; for speech and mind being both created objects that belong to the world, the all-transcendent Brahman cannot be expressed or dealt with by them. It is the manifestation of Him as visible (perceptible by the senses) that can be characterized as “jāḍa” (dead matter) ; this point will be specially discussed later on since the world of visible material objects remain in Brahman-nature, shorn of its deadness (as matter) and as one with the power of consciousness (the power as “dr̥k”— viewer) Parabrahman cannot be jāḍa (unconscious) in nature ; His essential nature, nevertheless, can be described as “non-dual” (advaita) and, as such, omniscient (sarvajña). There being no distinction in Brahman-nature between knowledge, object of knowledge and knower, and all things manifested in the past, being manifested in the present and to be manifested in future being inherent in Brahman-nature, the nature of Parabrahman is not “particular-consciousness”; it must be held to be omnipresent and all-pervading (vibhu) in nature.³² There being no separate manifestation of any kind of guṇa (attribute) or power (śakti) in Parabrahman, He is described as “nirguṇa”, that is, “beyond the guṇas” (guṇātīta). Nevertheless, it has been stated earlier that the world issues from Brahman, is established in Him and it is in Him that it also dissolves; Hence, parabrahman is, on the one hand,

³² At the conclusion of this Quarter this “eternal omniscience” of Parabrahman has been thoroughly discussed.

nirguṇa, while on the other, the power of manifesting, sustaining and dissolving the world comprising both the conscious "dṛk" and the unconscious "dṛśya" also must be said to be possessed by Him; this world-manifesting power must be more pervasive than the world which comprises the dṛk-śakti (jīva-śakti) and dṛśya-śakti (jaḍa-varga—dead matter). For it is from Him (as the Source) that dṛk-śakti and dṛśya-śakti are manifested as separate and distinct entities. This power therefore, exists only in Parabrahman, not in the jīva. This power is called "aiśī-śakti" (divine power); Parabrahman, being endowed with this aiśī-śakti is also "saśaktika" (endowed with the attribute of power). Hence, in order to describe the nature of Parabrahman, He must be described, on the one hand, as devoid of distinctions of all kinds, full ("pūrṇa"-self-fulfilled), non-dual (advaita); on the other hand, He must be admitted to be as the cosmic creator, endowed with aiśī-śakti, cosmic controller, omniscient and the inner Regulator of all beings (antaryāmin). The two words "śakti" and "guṇa" are usually applied to Parabrahman in the same sense. Hence, the two terms "sarvaśaktimat" (omnipotent) or "saśaktika" (endowed with attributes) have the same significance; in this sense, Parabrahman is also saguṇa. Being the Agent of the Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution of Cosmos and its Controller, Parabrahman is called "Īśvara". Indeed, the reason why the Śruti too has used the word Brahman about Him is that He has vast (limitless, infinite) guṇas (śakti)—"vṛhanto guṇā yasminniṭi Brahma". This śakti being eternally inherent in the very nature of Parabrahman, He naturally manifests this mysterious Universe in an infinite variety of names and forms and brings about its maintenance and dissolution. Hence, He is both the instrumental as well the material cause of the World. Although this World is constituted of viewer (dṛk) and the viewed (dṛśya), it is usually the visible matter that is called "the world" (jagat). This world of matter has an infinite variety of forms; just as Parabrahman, by virtue of His "aiśī-śakti", has manifested this infinite visible world from His own Being, so, in order to contemplate and

enjoy (experience) it separately, it is He Himself who manifests (from His own Being) particular powers of vision. It is this power of vision that is called *jīva*. Hence, the state of *Īśvara*, the state of the *jīva*, and the state of the world—all these three are forms (aspects) of Brahman ³³ and, at the same time, Brahman is totally devoid of all forms, immutable, inert and yet eternally full (self-complete, self-fulfilled) in nature.

(6) Now the nature of the *jīva* will be specifically discussed.

(A) *Īśvara* is omniscient and omnipotent; He manifests Himself in a plurality of forms and contemplates Himself as infinitely multiple. The power by virtue of which Brahman contemplates Himself in a multiplicity of forms, the power whose function it is to do so, is called "*jīva-śakti*". This multiple vision, however, is of two kinds; the contemplation of the manifested cosmos, though multiple and various, as one with Brahman is one kind while the vision of it as distinct from Brahman (The vision, that is to say, of it as existing separately without noticing that Brahman is its material cause and ultimate Ground) is the other kind.

I shall try to make this point a little more clear by an example. If one reflects on this matter calmly, it will be seen that plants draw their nourishment from the Earth ; hence, all the parts of a tree like the trunk, the branches, leaves and fruits are transformations of the

³³ The existence of both "*saguṇatva*" and "*nirguṇatva*" in the same entity may appear to be inconceivable to the mind ; nevertheless, the infallibly authentic ṛṣis who had had a direct knowledge of Brahman and the śruti itself have described the nature of Brahman in precisely this manner. It will be shown in the next Quarter of this book (and in *Vedānta-darśana* as well) that even logically this conclusion cannot be rejected as fallacious and no other view is more tenable (valid) ; it will also be shown that the self-perception of every *jīva* regarding his own essential nature and his knowledge of external objects of the world—both favour this conclusion.

earth.³⁴ Animal bodies grow by eating plants, leaves, fruits and so on which are transformation of the earth; hence, the animal body too is a transformation of earth; though this is true but this truth is not easily understood by all that the bodies of plants and animals are one with and indistinguishable from, the Earth; this is the reason why though in the case of soil of many kinds and from many places we feel that it is one with the earth,, we usually do not feel the same about animal bodies and plants. Though on reflection we come to realize the earthen nature of all these (animals and plants) the deep-seated notion (impression) of their distinction is not easily dispelled. When, through sādhanā the egoistic propensity is considerably diminished, this notion (saṃskāra— impression) is removed. Similarly, though the world is one with Brahman the sense of distinction between it and Brahman is usual with jīvas. Through argument some may arrive at the knowledge that the world is one with Brahman ; but the inveterate impression (saṃskāra) of difference (bheda) is so firm in jīvas that it is not easily dispelled. When, after the removal of these saṃskāras through long and arduous sādhanā Brahman-realization takes place, one's own self and the world are both experienced as one with Brahman. Hence, the vision of jīva is of two kinds ; in the vision (knowledge) of ordinary jīvas his own self and the world around him are different from Brahman ; they are called "baddha" (bound) jīvas. Those, on the other hand, who after the attainment of real knowledge have become free from all kinds of "bheda- saṃskāra" (innate impressions of difference) view themselves and the myriad-formed cosmos as one with Brahman. These latter kind of jīvas are called mukta puruṣas (liberated souls). Nevertheless, both kinds of jīvas are only (specific) powers of Brahman, His particular portions. Brahman remains embracing all jīvas and the

³⁴ All earthly objects are made up of the fine elements earth, water , fire, air and empty space ; here earth has been called the constituent element because the proportion of earth is larger in the bodies of animals and plants.

visible world as one with Himself. Hence, jīva is finite while Īśvara is boundless (infinite) ; jīva is only a portion of Īśvara while Īśvara is the whole (amśin). Hence between jīva and Īśvara there is considerable difference. And yet the jīva is not different from Brahman either, since he is a part of Him. The relation between the jīva and Īśvara therefore can be explained as one of "difference-in-non-difference" (bhedābheda). In the knowledge of the baddha-jīva only the element of difference (bheda) in this relation of bheda is accepted. After taking refuge in the Sadguru and thus knowing the relation between himself and the world around him with Brahman, the jīva resorts to the sādhana taught him by the guru ; by this all his deep-seated notions of difference (dualism) are dispelled and after the direct experience of Brahman, he attains oneness with Brahman and, as a result, Ignorance (ajñāna) which is the root of all our sufferings and troubles, cannot assail him any more. This ignorance which causes all sense of difference or dualism is called "avidyā". The jīva, forgetting his real nature as a portion of Īśvara through the influence of "avidyā" becomes connected with the body (with the senses and so on) manifested by Īśvara and thus identifying himself with it becomes bound by it and hence suffers the pangs of birth and death over and over again ; this is what is called "saṁartī" or saṁsāra (the course of mundane existence). Having in this way realized Brahman the jīva becomes self-poised (svastha) and is released from this endless passage through the world of phenomena. Hence, realization of Brahman-nature can be characterized as "mokṣa" and it is this state of mundane existence (in this phenomenal world) that is called "bhoga" or "bandha" (bondage). The realization of Parabrahman once attained, never falls away ; Brahman is all-pervasive ; He is the ultimate refuge of all. He is "guṇin" (the possessor and master of guṇas) while the world is constituted of guṇas ; hence, once the sādhanaka realizes the essential nature of the Guṇin his vision, in the absense of anything

that can disturb it, remains eternally imperturbable and he views all objects of this world as Brahman.

(B) The "jīvaśakti" will now be described in a slightly different way. The non-dual, omniscient Parabrahman manifests Himself in an infinite multiplicity of forms through His divine power (aiśī-śakti); in order to contemplate these innumerable forms separately, He enters every part of Himself (as manifested in the cosmos). By this Self-penetration He becomes, as it were, divided into an infinite number of tiny fragments ; these innumerable, subtle, inherent (anupraviṣṭa) powers which are known as "dr̥k-śaktis" are called jīva. Hence, the jīva is atomic, (extremely subtle) a portion (amśa) of Brahman. Nevertheless, just as Brahman is omniscient, Consciousness by nature and not unconscious, the jīva too is conscious by nature, not unconscious (like dead matter). Through this jīva-śakti Brahman contemplates (apprehends) Himself as separate and distinct particulars. The infinite variety of forms in which Brahman manifests Himself remain only as visible objects to this jīvaśakti ; hence, these (forms) are not endowed with knowledge (perception) ; this is why they are familiar to us as "jāḍa" (dead-matter) or "acetana" (unconscious). In every part of visible material objects jīva-śakti is inherent as its spectator ; hence every part of the world is unconscious matter, experienced as an object of visual perception ; and yet, the jīva-śakti being inherent in it, is also jīva. The part constituted by visible matter may be called the external body of the jīva. It is on account of connection with the (external body) that the jīva comes to identify himself with it.

(C) The most subtle, unmanifest (avyakta) state of the visible world of matter is called "Prakṛti". It is this Prakṛti which is "Brahma-śakti", the seed of the visible, material Universe ; the jīva-śakti mentioned above is inherent in Prakṛti. The unmanifest Prakṛti, assuming an infinite variety of forms has manifested Itself as the world. Though jīva-śakti is

essentially subtle and atomic in nature, it is capable of making every form however small or vast, that issues from Prakṛti, an object of its knowledge (perception) ; hence it is that the śāstras after characterizing the jīva as atomic by nature have ascertained that the jīva is all-pervasive (vast) in relation to his guṇas (qualities, attributes).

(7) Nevertheless, though manifesting Himself as the jīva and the visible material world Brahman, remains in His essence, One and non-dual (advaita). As the Sun though one, by entering various mirrors and water reservoirs through its reflections assumes various forms and produces diverse effects and is perceived as multiple and different, so, Brahman too, being reflected, as it were, as jīva in every part of the visible material cosmos, performs various acts through him (the jīva) ; it is Brahman therefore who is the Controller and Dispensor of all the diverse actions of the jīva. Though manifesting Himself as the jīva and the jagat (the world), being both the Controller and the ultimate Ground of jīva and jagat Brahman remains devoid of all activities and absolute non-dual (advaita)³⁵.

(8) It has already been said that Prakṛti has innumerable manifested forms ; the jīva-śakti being connected with all these forms, the number of jīvas too is infinite. The jīva, on account of his dwelling in unconscious Prakṛti can also be called "puruṣa" (puri śete iti puruṣah— "He lies in the "pur", body; hence, his name puruṣa). These material forms are called the external semblances (bahiraṅga) or bodies (deha) or "signs" (liṅga) of the indwelling jīvas. The Puruṣa, remaining thus constantly with the body, identifies Himself with it and experiences joys and sorrows; this is why the Puruṣa is referred to as the "bhoktā" (enjoyer, experiencer) while the visible forms of Prakṛti as his "bhogya" (object of

³⁵ It is very difficult for the discriminative Intelligence to grasp this duality of Brahman. Some attempt has been made to explain this towards the close of this Quarter; but this matter has been specifically discussed in the next Quarter of this sections and in Vedānta Darśana (2.1.14), (3.2.11) sūtras ; it has also been discussed in particular, incidentally at other places.

enjoyment). According to differences in the state of Prakṛti, the jīva's body is three-fold; "sthūla" (gross), "sūkṣma" (subtle) and "kāraṇa" (primordial). The differences between them will be explained thoroughly later on. The nature of Brahman and the jīva is thus set forth in a general manner. Now, something more will be said concerning liberated souls in particular.

(9) Just as Parabrahman remains eternally in the two states, saṁguṇa and nirguṇa, so the "muktapuruṣa" (liberated soul) too remains in this dual state. Just as Parabrahman, though nirguṇa in His essence, creates the cosmos by manifesting the guṇas and by dwelling in them, the muktapuruṣa too, after being established in the nature of Parabrahman continues to perform all actions by means of the body in which he achieved liberation while alive through practising sādhanā; for it has been stated in the śāstras that the 'karma' they inherited from previous births and which, causing this present incarnation has begun to bear fruits, is not destroyed even after attaining enlightenment. But as Brahman, even after accomplishing the act of cosmic Creation remains perpetually beyond them all and totally non-attached, so the liberated souls remaining in the physical body performs all actions by it and even though connected with the body, stays transcending all these (actions), free from any attachment. Just as, at the time of Cosmic Dissolution all gross elements, after suffering destruction, remain in the state the unmanifest Prakṛti, so at the end of prārabdha-bhoga (working out of 'prārabdha karma' which gave rise to the present birth) the gross body of the muktapuruṣa too drops off, and they exist as one with Parabrahman. At that time the constituents of their subtle body attains the nature of Brahman; that is to say, their manifestation as separate entities from Brahman ceases; the distinction between the guṇa and the guṇin disappears; thus, they receive the title, 'nirguṇa'. But being indissolubly fused with Īśvara they become, like

Īśvara, nirguṇa on the one hand and saguṇa on the other; hence, they can assume any body at will and perpetuate any body they like and their movements are everywhere unimpeded. Although they have no particular wish of their own (wholly assimilated in Brahman as they are), at the earnest wish of other sādhakas and bhaktas a desire for such actions may sometimes arise in them. Nevertheless, whatever body they may assume, being an integral part of saguṇa Brahman, they exist, even though liberated, as portions of Īśvara. They are not separate from Īśvara ; it is on account of being united with Īśvara that they attain relative omnipotence ; this is the reason why contrary to the case of two wholly independent persons becoming agents there arises the possibility of conflict, even when many souls become liberated there is no apprehension of such conflicts in the act of Cosmic Creation; for all (such liberated souls) become integrally united with the one Īśvara. The dual nature of Brahman which the śāstras affirm also holds good for these liberated souls as well.

(10) Thus the Soul (puruṣa) has been described as of two kinds: "mukta" and "baddha". However the term Puruṣa is also used with reference too Parabrahman. In the sense of "pūrṇamanena sarvam" (all this is filled by Him) the term Puruṣa may also denote Parabrahman. But when applied to Parabrahman it is the word "Uttama-Puruṣa" that is being used. The meaning of the term Puruṣa however, has to be determined in particular cases by the intention of the speaker (author).

(11) It has been stated before that this world is constituted of guṇas. To make this point intelligible I am citing an example. I am looking at a rose; on reflection it is seen that through this (act of seeing) what I am perceiving now is only a particular colour like white, red and so on of a particular shape and a particular smell and a particular sense of touch ;

in this case, it is a particular form, a particular smell, a particular tactual sensation that is the object of my perception. A man who is blind from birth has no perception of form ; what he perceives is only a smell and a touch ; if any person is congenitally devoid of the sense of smell, he can perceive (the presence of) the rose only by the form and the nature of the tactual sensation. If a person, again, is congenitally incapable of perceiving all the three— the form, the smell, the touch, he may perhaps, ascertain the presence of a particular object, namely, rose through the sense of taste alone ; for him the term rose signifies an object which has a special taste. Nevertheless, this smell, touch, form and taste— all these are only *guṇas* (qualities). The rose can exist even when bereft of its smell ; when it dries up its earlier form is altered, its feel is also changed, so does its odour and taste ; all these, the form, the taste, the smell and so on are therefore only *guṇas*, and yet by the term "rose" what I actually recognize is a combination of particular *guṇas*; by the utterance of the word rose what I directly apprehend is only this combination of *guṇas*. Along with these I also have, it is true, a notion that as the substratum (*āśraya*) of all these *guṇas* there exists an indefinable something; of its real nature however I have no definite knowledge. When such perceptions of objects are examined it is found that it is through the mingling in various proportions of these five *guṇas* — sound, touch, form, taste and smell— that our specific knowledge of objects is formed. For the perception of external objects we have the five sense-organs: ear, skin, eyes, tongue and nose; apart from these we have no other power for perceiving external objects ; so, (external) objects are apprehended only as perceptible by these five sense-organs ; with regard to any external objects we have no knowledge except this. As to the real nature of the underlying substance, the ultimate source of all these sensible qualities— sound, touch, form, taste and smell is beyond our mental faculties; hence all this visible Cosmos is, from our point of view, constituted only of *guṇas*. What we identify as a particular object with a particular

name is only a combination these guṇas. The substance (entity) that underlies all these guṇas as their ultimate Ground (substratum) is Parabrahman — it has been revealed by the Śruti. Learning this from the Śruti and adopting the spiritual process (sādhana) enjoined by the Śruti, the knowledge of this underlying Reality, Brahman, occurs. (When the term "āśraya" is used in such a context it should be known as signifying only the relation between the guṇas and the guṇin, the container (ādhāra) and the thing contained (ādheya)).

(12) The guṇas are three-fold; they are called sattva, rajas and tamas. But combining themselves in various ways they have manifested themselves in the form of this infinite Cosmos; hence the entire Universe is constituted of the three guṇas, and the infinitely subtle state of Prakṛti mentioned above— that too is therefore, composed of these three guṇas. Sattvaguna is, in its essence, knowledge and light in character; is essentially dynamic and active; Tamoguna is obstructive of the other two guṇas, deludes the mind (through ignorance) and is heavy; its essential nature is indolence, inertia and dullness. All these three qualities always exist in combination (with one another); whichever of the three becomes dominant is followed and subserved by the other two.

(13) At the beginning of Creation these three guṇas remain inactive and in a state of equilibrium, one with Brahman and merged in Him. Just as the forces like lust and anger are manifested in the jīva only when a stimulating factor is present while at other times they remain dormant in the jīva and merged in him and having no separate and distinct manifestation at all, so at the beginning of Creation these three guṇas remain merged in Brahman; they do not have in the slightest degree, a separate mode of existence (manifestation); at that time there being no visible object manifested, the jīva śakti too has no separate manifestation apart from Brahman; it (jīvaśakti) too remains lying in Brahman, one with Him. When the act of creation starts again and particular states of transformation

of the natural guṇas appear the jīva-śakti too, remaining connected with them manifests as innumerable jīvas assuming an infinite variety of bodies.

(14) The Cosmic process which is set in motion by the infinitely powerful Brahman—the ṛṣis have described it as constituted of twenty-five “tattvas” (Cosmic principles or entities). This term “tat” (that) signifies Parabrahman who transcends all guṇas of Prakṛti while “tattva”, denotes the jīva-śakti and the entire phenomenal Cosmos established in Brahman. A diagrammatic representation of the twenty-five tattvas is being appended here.

- (1) Puruṣa (2) Prakṛti (3) Mahat (4) Ahaṁ-tattva (5) Manas (6,7,8,9,10) five jñānendriyas (sense-organs of knowledge or perception), (11, 12, 13, 14, 15), five karmendriyas (sense-organs of actions) (16, 17, 18, 19, 20). The five tanmātras (subtle elements) (21, 22, 23, 24, 25) five mahābhūtas (gross elements); this group of twenty-five (Cosmic), entities has been called “pañcaviṁśati-tattvas (twenty-five cosmic principles). In relation to these twenty five tattvas Parabrahman as the ultimate Ground of all has been specifically mentioned by bhagavān Vyāsadeva as the twenty-sixth (ṣaḍviṁśa) tattva in the Shānti Parvan in the Mahābhārata; it will be cited later on.

(15) How from the unmanifest Prakṛti comprising the three guṇas, combined with Puruṣa all the (twenty-four) tattvas from Mahat to kṣiti (Earth) have manifested themselves will now be described :

(a) Just as a person in the state of “suṣupti” (deep dreamless sleep) is naturally awakened after a certain period of time, and his senses which remained in a state of inactivity during suṣupti start functioning after awakening (by manifesting themselves), so, in the state of Prakṛti the guṇas take on an unmanifest and inert condition; after the passage of some time, rajoguṇa, the principle of all movement and dynamism, being

awakened manifests itself in combination with sattva and tamas. "Dr̥k-śakti" (Puruṣa), owing to the absence of all that is visible lies dormant in Parabrahman; however in that state he (Puruṣa) lacks the knowledge of the essential nature of Parabrahman; just as in the state of suṣupti a person does not have knowledge of the true self, and only rests in a subtle and blissful state of (unmanifest) Prakṛti so, in the Puruṣa who is merged in Prakṛti the knowledge of his own source — Brahman remains absent; he remains then only as pure contemplative power (Dr̥k-śakti). Later, when under the impulsion from Īśvara the process of Creation is set in motion under the influence of rajoguṇa, sattva and tamas manifest themselves in the manner mentioned above. It is only the pure cognitive function characteristic of sattvagūṇa that becomes the object of his contemplation; the only knowledge he has at that time is that He is (in his true nature) distinct from the act of knowledge. Tamoguṇa, remaining then in an extremely mild state hinders the cognitive function (of buddhi or sattva) from realizing the true nature of the self (Puruṣa). This cognitive function which is collectively known as "Buddhi-tattva" (Mahat) is at that time viewed as the external Form (vahiramāṇa) of the Puruṣa. To bring about this state is the first Act of Creation ; it is this state that has been characterized as "Mahat-tattva". It is also known as the state of "Prajñā" (supreme wisdom). The person who has reached this stage (of prajñā-bhūmi) feels that he is in his true nature beyond Buddhi. (From the cosmic point of view) The Puruṣa as the indwelling spirit of Buddhi-tattva is the first person of Cosmic Creation.

(B) The rajoguṇa in the Puruṣa dwelling in Mahat-tattva set in motion again by divine impetus directs the Mahat-tattva. The element of tamas, increasing in force veils the Prajñā inherent in Mahat-tattva; as a result, the knowledge of the Puruṣa while dwelling in Mahat-tattva by which he knew Himself as separate from "Buddhi"— even that knowledge of his then vanishes; he becomes unable to conceive Himself as beyond Buddhi; Puruṣa

becomes identified with Him and, consequently, He regards Buddhi as His very self. It is this Puruṣa endowed with the ego-sense that is known as "Ahaṁ-tattva" (the cosmic Ego-principle). This delusion of the Puruṣa through which He identifies Himself with Buddhi is caused by "tamas". The fact that after living for a long time in a room or with a person or an object one becomes identified with that room or that object is common experience. The notion that "these objects are not self" (anātman) is at first present in Mahat-tattva; but through long association (with them) the Buddhi becomes sluggish (overcome by tamas); it is no longer able to conceive Himself as separate ; hence, it becomes identified with these external objects.³⁶ The Puruṣa indwelling Mahat-tattva too, as a result of residing continuously in Mahat-tattva, his tamoguna being increased slackens his ability of judgement (discrimination) and obstructs the sense of distinction between Buddhi and himself ; consequently the Puruṣa, lapsing, regards the Buddhi as his own self and is thus transformed into the Puruṣa characterized by the ego-sense.

(C) When again, at the will of God (Īśvara) and in due course the Puruṣa indwelling Ahaṁ-tattva is wholly directed by rajoguṇa, according to the preponderance of the sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa elements in Ahaṁ-tattva these undergo various transformations. On the one hand, from that part of the Buddhi which is constituted of the sattva-dominated ego-sense the "indriya" (sense-organ) called "manas" appears, and there being some manifestation of rajoguṇa in it, it is accompanied by will (saṁkalpa); that is to say, it

³⁶ The particular house which I regard as my own is something with which I identify myself so far that if another person causes damage to it I feel as if my heart is rent asunder and I make myself miserable. I feel almost as much pain as when my own body is hurt. The fact that I feel distress when my body is hurt is also explained by this self-identification with the body. It is a portion of the food I take that is transformed into the body ; I know this body to be distinct from myself ; but as a consequence of the "Buddhi" being deluded thus I identify myself with it.

is, by nature, eager to grasp some object contemplated by it. In this condition the tāmāsa element brings about the stability of (the true nature of) manas.

On the other hand, the tāmāsa element in Ahaṁ-tattva being specifically intensified by rajoguṇa largely veils the sāttvika element in it, namely, Buddhi and with the help of only the element of ego-sense and condensing it (Buddhi) as it were, appears specifically as pure sound. To grasp the true nature of this pure sound (śabda) is extremely difficult. The sound that we commonly perceive is generated by something being struck by something else ; it is a mixed entity ; it is "nāda" (pure-sound, not caused by stroke) in combination with ordinary sound, touch and so on. But the pure sound mentioned above is not "nāda" ; it is pure sound distinct even from "nāda", the true nature of which can be somewhat understood by the fact that it is possible to practise steady remembrance of the Divine and "japa" of sounds (mantra or nāma) mentally without moving the tongue and the lips. As a matter of fact, the sages who have realized the truth have ascertained that it is impossible for us generally, even to think without having recourse to power of words. It has been said earlier that all objects are constituted of guṇas like sound, touch and so on ; it is specific combinations of guṇas, designated by specific names that appear in our knowledge (perception) as objects (vastu) and we perceive particular objects as belonging to some particular genus or class (kind). This point will be made clear by an example : I know (perceive) an object with a specific shape as a cow ("go") but this word "cow" signifies a particular "class" ("jāti") of animals; it does not denote a particular cow; it is a general term ; hence, it is only after being related to my knowledge of the class of animals named cow, that this particular object with a specific shape is perceived (known) by me as a "cow". But this class or general kind (sāmānya) of cows I know by the mere sound "cow" ("go") ; I have never experienced the general entity called "cow" apart from particular objects

(specimens of cows).³⁷ Hence, it is this word "cow" which when we are going to think about it, sets my thought in motion ; going beyond it (the sound "cow") the thought of it cannot usually exist. Such words mostly signify universals; it follows that buddhi, in order to think about anything at all cannot do so without an object as support and when no object is perceived separately as an universal and whenever one is going to think one cannot as a rule do so without knowledge of some universal, a little reflection will enable us to realize that people in general cannot think at all without the support of words. This sound of a word however is not "nāda" as manifested. Hence, in this way it can be, to some extent, understood that pure, unmixed Sound (śabda) is far more subtle than ordinary "nāda".³⁸ That Praṇava ("OM") is the priestine and subtlest form of śabda, the śruti and the ṛṣis have unanimously revealed. But what the subtle essence of Praṇava is cannot be known except by persons who are yogins. The degree to which this is suggested by the "OM" as the articulated Praṇava is not to be found in any other word of any kind; this is the reason why all the śāstras have declared its pre-eminence. However that may be, it is this pure, unmixed sound which is called śabda-tanmātra (literally, "only sound and nothing else".) that is the first evolute of the tāmasa element of "Ahaṁ-tattva".

When this tamāsa-dominated evolute, śabda-tanmātra comes into being, in order to know (perceive) the nature of that "śabda" (sound) the rājasa element in Ahaṁ-tattva

³⁷ According to Nyāya-śāstra (Indian system of Logic) the universals are objects of perception; what this means is that those elements which may be called general (or universal) are perceived together with other elements. In this sense, the "general" is also objective. But by comparing various particular objects the mind (buddhi) holds it for comprehension.

³⁸ As a matter of fact, words composed of more than one syllable (varṇa) are not external objects ; it is the buddhi that by combining together different varṇa conceives the sound of words as "sphoṭa" (the eternal and imperceptible element of sound which gives rise to sudden perception of the meaning as in a flash).

increases and is turned into the sense-organ of hearing (śrotrendriya); this sense-organ (of hearing) fully grasps that sound as its own object. Nevertheless, though this sense-organ receives sound as its object, the Puruṣa indwelling Ahaṁ-tattva apprehends this sound which is the product of tamas with the sāttvika evolute of Ahaṁ-tattva called "manas". But manas is different from śrotrendriya (organ of hearing) ; so it has its separate function too; to receive the knowledge of sound is not its only function. Manas, therefore, sometimes receives sound-perception, sometimes it does not; whenever, however, manas in combination with the auditory sense-organ is keen to receive sound-perception, then sound too becomes perceptible; for śabda had appeared separately already from the tāmasa part of Ahaṁ-tattva. Hence it is that the jīva endowed with manas and śrotra (ear) learns to conceive anything that is heard as a separately existing permanent entity. This is how the sense of distinction between the spectator (draṣṭā) and the object seen (drṣṭa) arises fully. The name of this permanent entity having sound (śabda) as its essence is "Ākāśa-tattva" (The infinite Void). The guṇas being established in Brahman as their ultimate Ground, it is natural for the jīva to regard them as substances (dravya) ; the guṇas are apprehended as existing in this Ground (Substratum) which is beyond the indriyas (sense-organs); so they are regarded as substances (dravya). But it is only when compared (related) to the underlying substratum that they are called guṇas. This is the essential principle (tattva) of guṇas and vastu (object) . Hence, the earlier mentioned substance called "Ākāśa" becomes the object of the auditory sense-organ, the latter receives "śabda" as its guṇa (characteristic quality); however, apart from this śabda-guṇa the jīva has usually no conception at all regarding the nature of Ākāśa, the underlying substance of śabda.

The mode of origination of "śabda-tanmātra", the auditory sense-organ (śrotrendriya) and Ākāśa have been explained. The mode of creation of other elements and cognitive sense-

organs (jñānendriya) is the same. The tāmasa element (part) of Ākāśa having in due course increased further, its subtlety begins to be veiled and it condenses; in this state its tactual quality is manifested; this tactual quality is called "sparśa-tanmātra" (the subtle element indicated by "touch") ; in order to perceive it the sense-organ called "tvac" ("touch") appears from the rājasa part of Ahaṁ-tattva like the auditory sense-organ, and as a stimulant of this sense of touch the second Cosmic element "Marut" appears ; it is the permanent substance constituted of śabda and sparśa — sound and touch and the jīva perceives it as a separately existing substance. When this "Marut" keeps producing tactual sensation continuously and in succession it is perceived as a "current" (pravāha) ; hence, it becomes perceptible to jīva as something characterized by the sensation of touch and flow (motion); "Marut", therefore is the source of all our perception of movement. This perception of motion again, causes our sense of "distance"; from this the perception of extension is generated ; this extension is called "deśa". The true nature of absolute Void - Ākāśa, is revealed only in "samādhi-prajñā" (the higher spiritual knowledge that results from samādhi) and when, through samādhi the functions of all other senses are suppressed and the auditory sense-organ (śrotrendriya) remains manifest, then and only then the true nature of Ākāśa as constituted of unmixed, pure śabda, empty of all content, is revealed in the state of "prajñā". Nevertheless, the knowledge of ordinary jīvas of Ākāśa is mixed with perceptions like distance and visible forms which appear later in the process of Creation.

After the appearance of Marut-tattva and the sense-organ of touch (tvac) the tāmasa part of Ahaṁ-tattva increases further and from it the rūpa-tanmātra (the subtle element of Form) and the substance characterized by this quality, "Tejas", the third cosmic element and for its apprehension the third cognitive sense-organ "cakṣus" (the organ of vision)

appear from the rājasa part of Ahaṁ-tattva ; and in the same manner "rasa-tanmātra" (the subtle element of taste) and the fourth cosmic element "Ap" (water, liquid substance), constituted of this, appears, along with the fourth cognitive sense-organ "rasanā" (the organ of taste) ; and, finally, "gandha-tanmātra" (the subtle essence of smell) and the fifth cosmic element chiefly characterized by it, "Kṣiti" (earth, gross matter) and the fifth cognitive sense-organ, nose, came into being.³⁹

(D) An analysis of this process of Creation reveals that in the last mentioned gross cosmic element called "Kṣiti" the first four cosmic elements are included, and the five tanmātra, like śabda and so on, which are characteristic attributes of the five gross elements, are all present in this "Kṣiti-tattva". Similarly, in the "Mahābhūta" (gross cosmic element) called "Ap", the first three Mahābhūtas (Ākāśa, Marut and Tejas) are present ; so are the four elemental qualities (guṇas)— "śabda", "sparśa", "rūpa" and "rasa" ; in the

³⁹ Even modern scientists have ascertained that the visible world is a transformation of accumulated energy; they are demonstrating that the atoms of solid, liquid and gaseous substances are transformations of the subtle substance— "electricity". Many thousand years ago, the ancient ṛṣis had discovered that from a substance called Marut, (which is constituted of guṇas) all visible objects, solid, liquid and gaseous have come into being. It is Marut, endowed with (kinetic) power of mobility that is called "tarit" (electricity). "Ākāśa" is even subtler ; even "tarit" dissolves in it. In Chapter 42 of Aśvamedha Parvan of the Mahābhārata, Bhagavan Śrī Kṛṣṇa quotes an utterance by Brahmā, which reads:

dvitīyaṁ mārutobhūtaṁ tvagadhyātmañca viśrutam,
spraṣṭavyamadhibhūtañca vidyuttatrādhidaivatam. (19.20)

- The second cosmic element (bhūta) has tvac as its "adhyātma" (sense organ) and whatever is tangible as its "adhibhūta" (finer substratum) and "vidyut" (lightning, electricity) as its "adhidaiva" (the indwelling deity). By this the goddess called "Vidyut" has been called the indwelling deity of the tangible "Marut". This is precisely what can be inferred from an analysis of the true nature of the subtle "Marut-tattva" and "tarit".

Mahabhūti called "Tejas", "Ākāśa" and "Marut" are included and the three guṇas— śabda, "sparśa" and "rūpa" are present in it ; in the Mahābhūta called "Marut" "Ākāśa" is present and it possesses the two guṇas "śabda" and "sparśa" ; in the Mahābhūta called Ākāśa no other Mahābhūta is present, and its only attribute (guṇa) is śabda.

This visible world around us is constituted of these above-mentioned five Mahābhūtas ; it is not however true that a particular class of objects has been produced by one particular Mahābhūta ; the atoms of the five Mahābhūtas, combined in various proportions, have produced all objects belonging to this world. Every object is composite ; but in some object it is some particular Mahābhūta which is preponderant ; in some other object some other particular Mahābhūta preponderates. It is that Mahābhūta which is preponderant in a particular substance that gives the latter its name and defines its class ; for instance, in soil or clay (mṛttikā) the proportion of "Kṣiti" is the highest ; this is why it is specifically called "Kṣiti" ; however, the proportion of Kṣiti in gold is greater; but the proportion of 'teja' in gold being greater than earth or soil it is sometimes characterized as "taijasa" (made of "tejas") ; it is also sometimes referred to as "Kṣiti". Even in the water we drink an element of "Kṣiti" is present, so too are the other four Mahābhūtas ; but the proportion of "Ap" being predominant, it may indeed be designated "Ap". When the proportion of tejas (heat) in water is increased it is turned into vapour ; when the proportion of tejas is (considerably) diminished, it is turned into ice ; this proves the presence of tejas in water. The fire we see— in that too, all the five Mahābhūtas co-exist ; nevertheless, it is the element of tejas that is preponderant in it ; it is on this account that it can be called a taijasa (pertaining to tejas) element. The intensity of tactual sensation characterizes condensed electricity ('tarit' which is related to "Marut"); the luminous form of fire (agni) is the distinctive characteristic of tejas. The fire that resides within a piece of wood is not visible, but through fiction it manifests itself as fire. As a matter of fact, in all objects with forms and colours like white,

yellow and so on, tejas - it should be noted - is present. In air (vāyu), the element of Marut is predominant, hence air is generally known as "Marut". The substance called Ākāśa is extremely subtle (ethereal) ; hence, it is all-pervasive ; it is not circumscribed by any object of this world ; it is as empty space (Void) that we experience it ; and yet combined in a subtle manner, it is present in every object. Indeed, Ākāśa without form is not perceptible to us.

Just as in every successive Mahābhūta, the preceding Mahābhūtas are present (in combination with it) so in every successive quality (guṇa) like smell, the preceding guṇas inhere. For instance, in the guṇa called "gandha" (smell) sound, touch, form and taste all are present (in combination); in our alfactory sensation, the perception of all these as an admixture is more or less present. The same is true about all the other qualities.

All gross substances in this visible world of ours being composite in character, it is very difficult to 'know' the distinctive natures of pure, unmixed Mahābhūtas by singling out their specific qualities (guṇas). It is only through samādhi that the essential principles of all substances can be definitely known ; this is what the ṛṣis have told us.⁴⁰

The creative process involved in the genesis of "the principle of manas" and the five cognitive sense organs, the five "tanmātras" (subtle cosmic elements) and the five "Mahābhūtas" (gross cosmic elements) has been described. Now, the creative process involved in the genesis of the "karmendriyas" (sense-organs of action) will be described.

⁴⁰ Through "nirvitarka" (beyond dispute) "samāpatti" (samādhi) as well as savicāra and nirvicāra samādhi (to be explained later in the Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali) that the true nature of all substances, gross or subtle, can be known.

When the five qualities— “śabda”, “sparśa”, “rūpa”, “rasa” and “gandha” of the Mahābhūtas are perceived through the cognitive sense organs with the help of the mind (manas), the “rajoguṇa” of the Puruṣa indwelling Ahaṁ-tattva and endowed with manas and the five cognitive sense-organs is increased further and so he presumes that He is omnipotent; hence, He strives to assimilate and master the guṇas like “śabda”, “sparśa” and so on forming the five Mahābhūtas originating from the tāmasa part. In the principle of “manas”, both Ahaṁ-tattva and Buddhi-tattva are present ; “manas”, “abhimāna”-(Ahaṁ) and “Buddhi”— these three together is called (the function of) “antaḥ-karaṇa” (the internal organ). The guṇas like śabda, sparśa and so on of the Mahābhūtas which are perceived through the cognitive sense organs (jñānendriyas), the Puruṣa who regards Himself as all-pervasive (vibhu), tries to master by means of this “antaḥ-karaṇa -vṛtti”. First, assuming the śabda-guṇa of Ākāśa, He (the Puruṣa) manifests the “karmendriya” (sense-organ of action) called “vāk” (speech). Later, to hold within Himself, guṇas like sparśa, He manifests, by means of the antaḥ-karaṇa -vṛtti, the second karmendriya called “pāṇi” (hand, prehensive organ); the function of this karmendriya, called pāṇi is to hold (possess) these guṇas of the Mahābhūtas manifested by the jñānendriyas. The said all-pervading (vibhu) Puruṣa by holding in the same manner the distinctive faculty of “Marut”, namely, movement (calana), issues another karmendriya and manifests it in His own Being ; this karmendriya whose essence is movement is called “pāda” (foot organ of loco-motion). After these guṇas of the Mahābhūtas are held by the karmendriya called “pāṇi”, by manifesting another karmendriya called “upastha” (the organ for copulation) becomes, through it, wholly united with those guṇas and thus indistinguishably merged with them. By directing the jñānendriya, “tvac” whose function is to receive the quality of touch (sparśa guṇa) in a specific manner and through its help, this karmendriya called “upastha”

becomes united with the elements of guṇa held by the "pāṇi" and thus the Puruṣa, regarding Himself as "Vibhu" experiences Himself as fully endowed with guṇas like "śabda". Again, to reject the superfluous (useless) portions of the guṇas held and assimilated by the two karmendriyas called "pāṇi" and "upastha", the karmendriya called "pāyu" is created. The power of rejecting the unnecessary parts that the same Puruṣa (regarding Himself as "Vibhu") manifests is the true nature of this karmendriya called "pāyu".

The Puruṣa, possessing manas and the five jñānendriyas, endowed with the karmendriyas and thus bringing under His control with those karmendriyas the five tanmātras like śabda, sparśa and so on in the above manner, becomes, through the ego-sense (abhimāna) united with them. Hence, a body of His (this Puruṣa) is brought into being comprising the eleven indriyas (five jñānendriyas, five karmendriyas and manas) and the five tanmātras. By identifying Himself with it through His ego-sense He manifests Himself as embodied in it. This is characterized as His subtle (sūkṣma) body and it is the Puruṣa indwelling this subtle body (sūkṣma deha) that has been called "jīva" in the sāstras. The Puruṣa, having fully identified Himself with the sūkṣma -deha in all its parts, experiences the sense-organs as components of it (sūkṣma-deha) as His own faculties, and the jīvas characterized by these faculties (powers) being subjected to Fate (niyati) enter with the help of these (powers) the external body consisting of the five gross elements (Mahabhūta) like "Kṣiti", "Ap" and so on. After having entered this gross (physical) body He is transformed into the jīva indwelling the "sthūla deha" (gross body); this jīva, after carrying out various actions becomes bound by the saṃskāras (residual impressions) generated by these actions, assumes again, after the decease of one

particular sthūla deha , another sthūla deha appropriate to those saṁskāras. Thus, the jīva goes through this recurrent cycle of coming and going in this saṁskāra.

(16) It has been said before that of the 24 cosmic principles (caturvimśati-tattva) "Buddhi", "Ahaṁkāra" and "Manas"— these three together are called antaḥ-karaṇa -vṛtti. In contradistinction to it, the five jñānendriyas and the five karmendriyas can be characterized as "instruments" ("karaṇa" or "karaṇa-vṛtti"). For it is by means of these ten indriyas that the inner organ (antaḥ-karaṇa) assumes the sthūla deha as its own and thus performs all actions. ⁴¹ It is this inner organ (antaḥ-karaṇa) that first and primarily helps the Puruṣa in the operation of assuming the sthūla deha. The aforesaid Puruṣa inhabiting the "subtle body" (sūkṣma-deha) — the jīva, when about to enter the aforesaid sthūla deha, his antaḥ-karaṇa vṛtti is the first to be set in motion. It has been said earlier that in all material bodies the five Mahabhūtas are present in combination with one another. Within the gaseous element, that is present in those gross (material) bodies "Marut-tattva" being preponderant, the quality of touch (sparśa-guṇa) resides in this gaseous part in an extremely subtle form; hence, the jīva, at first, with the help of the three karmendriyas—"pāṇi", "tvac" and "upastha", mastering (controlling) the "Marut" element in the gaseous part of the sthūla deha assumes it (the sthūla deha) as his own by means of the antaḥ-karaṇa vṛtti. The Ākāśa, with "śabda" as its distinctive quality is all-pervasive ; no body can enclose it ; for it is extremely subtle. Air (vāyu) is enclosed, in some measure, within the

⁴¹ Without being connected with the manas these 10 indriyas cannot function. The term "karaṇa" therefore chiefly signifies manas, the five jñānendriyas and the five karmendriyas— these eleven indriyas. Nevertheless, manas, without with Ahaṁ-tattva and Buddhi-tattva is unable to do anything. Hence, speaking generally, the eleven indriyas (including Manas), Ahaṁ and Buddhi— all these 13 (principles) are "karaṇas". Among these however, only the ten external sense-organs that are the primary instruments (karaṇas).

gross body ; hence, the jīva, first by holding the subtle tactual quality (sparśa-guṇa) of the "Marut" element in the gaseous part (vāyu) with its "pāṇi" (prehensile organ) unites with the "Marut" element in the air with the help of tactual faculty and the "upastha" (genital organ) ; after this act of union the ego-sense at once attaches to it (the "Marut" part of the air within) ; as a result, He (the Puruṣa) regards the "Marut" as His own self. It is this "Marut" held by the jīva as His own self that is called "mukhya-prāṇa" (the chief "prāṇa" or vital breath). But when the jīva thus becomes united with the "Marut" element of the air within the body, He also becomes united with the air within (vāyu). When in this way, the jīva with the help of the gaseous part of the body, becomes connected with it, His karmendriyas and jñānendriyas, after assuming it as their own self, enter it and with its (the vāyu's) help makes their own distinctive faculties penetrate it. This indwelling vāyu, impelled by the power of the sense-organ performs fine kind of actions and, accordingly, they (the prāṇas) derive their respective names: namely,— Prāṇa, Apāna, Samāna, Vyāna and Udāna.⁴² With the help of these fine Prāṇas (or Vāyus) the jīva, uniting with the other physical parts of the whole body becomes identified with it; of these, the portion in which a particular sense-organ manifests its distinctive capacity has the same name as that particular indriya (sense-organ). They are, for instance: cakṣus (eye), kaṇa (ear), nāsika (nose), vāk (speech, tongue), pāṇi (hand), pāda (leg), upastha (the genital organ) and so on. With the help of these special instruments and the nerves that permeate the entire body, the aforesaid fine Prāṇas engage in their specific functions in the fully

⁴² Of these five Prāṇas, that by which the function of breathing is carried out is designated principally as Prāṇa; its place is between the heart centre and the nose. The function of Apāna Vāyu is ejection of superfluous substances (e.g. urination and defecation) ; its domain is between the navel and the big toe. The place of the Samāna Vāyu is the umbilical region, (navel) ; its function is to bring about the balance of the various rasas of the body. Vyāna is that Vāyu which pervades the entire body. The vāyu that brings about upward movements is called Udāna ; its domain is between the tip of the nose and the head.

developed physical body and, again, with the help of both these jīva receives knowledge of the external world of objects. To illustrate this matter let us take the case of visual perception. This is how it happens.

In this world of ours (Bhūrloka) the sun is the object in which the element of "tejas" is the most preponderant ; it is with the help of the sun-rays that the jīvas' act of visual perception is generally accomplished. If one examines closely how this happens, one can see that under the influence of the primal, creative outward-moving forces the heat (and light) of the sun being driven outward unites with the "taijasa" part of the subtle air outside and radiating in all directions as rays rushes in all directions at a terrific speed. When these rays reach the Earth, the taijasa part of the terrestrial atmosphere, coming in contact with it, becomes violently agitated. On the other hand, the forms of all terrestrial objects also are generated by their "taijasa" element. These "forms", under the influence of the natural outward-moving forces within these objects, being driven outwards unite with the "taijasa" part of the external atmosphere agitated by the form of light rays reach the gaseous "taijasa" element within the eye-ball of the seeing jīva and there, being associated with the "taijasa" element of neural "Vāyu" enters it (the neural vāyu). At the period of early infancy until the jñānendriyas of the jīva are not developed and thus become active, the forms of external objects, the moment they enter the neural vāyu in the manner-described above, the visual sense-organ receiving it from there offers it to Buddhi, the Puruṣa as the viewer then perceives them and through this He experiences either pleasure or pain. When the visual sense-organ of the adult human being becomes partially held in Buddhi through mental operations, the forms of external objects, entering in the manner stated above and the neural Vāyu within the eye draws the visual sense-organ, the jīva perceives them. The jīva however, in his infancy by the help of his visual

sense-organ, receiving the visible forms of external objects situated in the neural Vāyu within the eye-ball as things to be enjoyed (in the manner stated above) gradually, driven by the desire for enjoyment of those visible forms, begins to make an effort to project the visual sense-organ outside beyond the limits of the eye-ball. Consequently, proceeding to extend his power through his visual-organ with the help of the afore-mentioned "taijasa" part of the external Vāyu (atmosphere) received from the sun (or any other luminous object), of the external atmosphere goes out in the forward direction and the jīva thus receives the visible forms of distant objects and both apprehends and enjoys it. This is how through vision alone one can perceive distance. It is due to these differences in the capacity of the visual sense-organ from one person to another that constitute the differences in the capacity of distant vision among them . It is on account of this ability of the sense organs to travel far that the yogins are capable of clairvoyance (dūradarśana) and clair-audience (dūraśravaṇa); that in recent times some persons are being capable of "thought-reading" is also explained by this.

Hence, the vision of grown-up human beings takes place in three ways. Sometimes when the forms of external objects appear in the eye-ball, they are perceived, sometime again, the jīva, extending the visual sense-organs outwards, perceive and enjoy the forms of external objects ; at yet other times, the vision occurs through mutual interplay of both; the process is more or less the same, it should be understood, when it comes to the auditory and other sense-organs.

(17) The tattvas, starting from Ahaṁ-tattva and ending in Kṣiti-tattva, namely, "Ahaṁ-tattva", the eleven indriyas including "Manas", the five "tanmātras" and the five "Mahābhūtas"—these twenty two Cosmic principles and their substratum, "Mahat-tattva"

add up to twenty three in all; the puruṣa who dwells in the body constituted of these twenty three Cosmic principles is widely known as "Brahmā", "Hiraṇya-garbha" and so on ; He is also called "Mahā-Virāṭ". It is He who is the First Person (prathama Puruṣa) of the manifested cosmos. And the Puruṣa who dwells in the aforesaid twenty-two cosmic principles (tattvas) taken together constituting His body, is called Virāṭ, Aniruddha and so on. "Mahā-Virāṭ"— "Hiraṇya-garbha" is called "Vidyā-Srṣṭi" (literally, knowledge-creation). For, always beyond the state of "Ahaṁ" which springs from ego-sense (abhimāna), He does not identify Himself with Buddhi, which is His body. Before Creation, the aforementioned twenty-two tattvas (Cosmic Principles) exist merged in Hiraṇya-garbha (Puruṣa) in an unmanifest state. Just as the body of a Jīva exists in an unmanifest state in the egg (anḍa) and in due course after maturing it appears (manifests itself) so, from Buddhi, the Cosmic Egg (so to speak), is manifested as the twenty-two tattvas with Ahaṁ (abhimāna) as its self. This is the reason why the afore-mentioned twenty-three cosmic principles, manifest as well as unmanifest, taken together which constitute the Body of the Hiraṇya-garbha Puruṣa is called "Brahmāṇḍa". (Brahmā's or Hiraṇya-garbha's Cosmic Egg).

(18) By the combination of the aforesaid twenty-three tattvas in an infinite variety of ways this Universe, with its multiplicity of forms has been manifested ; hence, in every object in this visible cosmos, all these tattvas in varying proportions, are present. In some substances the tattvas with sattva-guṇa as dominant are present as preponderant; in some others, on the other hand, the proportion of the tattvas having rajo-guṇa as its dominant principle is greater, and in yet others the proportion of tamas-dominated tattvas is larger. The Puruṣa as the Spectator too is present in every object ; hence, all (objects) are jīvas. However, the particular physical object in which the Puruṣa appears, identifying Himself with it, is referred to as the embodied being (dehin). And, the other physical

entities constituted mainly of the fine Mahābhūtas, as His objects of sense-perception, may be described as, for Him, things to be enjoyed (bhogya) or seen (perceived). When these particular external physical entities constituted of specific tattvas are perceived by a particular Puruṣa as an object for enjoyment or visual Perception they can be characterized as "jaḍa" (dead-matter). When these (physical entities) are known as United with the conscious element (caitanya) indwelling them, they are known as jīvas. This matter will be explained thoroughly by an illustration. I am a human being ; if my true nature (svarūpa) is examined thoroughly, it will be seen that I am a conscious entity endowed with specific sensory qualities namely "śabda", "sparśa", "rūpa", "rasa" and "gandha" and constituted of the fine Mahābhūtas, (Kṣiti, Ap, Tejas, Marut and Vyoman) eleven indriyas including "Manas", Ahaṁkāra (abhimāna) and Buddhi. Of these, even that part which is constituted of the five Mahābhūtas (mentioned above) I feel as my very self : this is what is thought of as my body, the place (abode) of enjoyment. This is called the "sthūla deha". At death, this alone gets separated. The remaining composite of Buddhi, Ahaṁkāra , the eleven indriyas including manas and the fine tanmātras is then conceived as the outward body of the conscious Puruṣa indwelling it. This body of the jīva consisting of these eighteen tattvas is called the subtle body (sūkṣma-deha or śarīra) and when this subtle body assumes the unmanifest (avyakta) state after merging in the Unmanifest Prakṛti at the time of cosmic Dissolution (Mahā-pralaya), the jīva-caitanya exists in the Principle of Prakṛti which is the unmanifest state of the three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas); then, it is this unmanifest Prakṛti that is conceived as the body of the jīva. This is called the "kāraṇa-deha" (the ultimate causal body) of the jīva. But the thing to be noted in particular regarding these three kinds of bodies is that, it is only when combined with the "sthūla deha" that the jīva perceives and enjoys all objects of this world ; the subtle body is not fit for enjoyment like the gross body ; and as for the kāraṇa-deha, there being nothing

that is manifest in it, no enjoyment of any kind can take place in it. An analysis of the essence of my being reveals this only as my true nature (svarūpa). The same is the case with all other jīvas as well. When I identify myself with my gross body (sthūla deha), all other gross bodies appear only as objects of my visual perception and enjoyment; so I regard them as dead-matter (jaḍa). Nevertheless, dr̥k-śakti (contemplative power) or Puruṣa is also present in those bodies ; hence, when I perceive these bodies as endowed with dr̥k-śakti , I refer to them not as "jaḍa" but as "jīva". Now, the Buddhi-tattva with sattva-guṇa as its essence has been described before as pure knowledge is not present in equal measure in all bodies ; the greater the degree of sattva-guṇa in a body, the higher and nobler is the (spiritual) state of the embodied jīva. In some bodies the amount of knowledge that is present (associated with it) is so small that generally it becomes hard to believe that he has any knowledge at all ; these entities are usually known as "jaḍa". Nevertheless, even in them the cognitive element is faintly present. An Indian scientist following the Western Scientific method has recently demonstrated that even within those objects which we characterize as jaḍa, consciousness (cognitive aspect) is faintly present; hence, even those objects actually deserve to be called jīvas. This is also the message of the great (truth-knower – "tattva-vit") ṛṣis of old.

(19) It has been said earlier, from the combination of the twenty-two tattvas beginning with Ahaṁkāra this cosmos has been manifested in an infinite multiplicity of visible forms. However, the combination of tattvas is of two kinds: combination as a whole and in various individual parts. This may be illustrated by an example: In my body every minutest particle of blood or flesh constitutes the bodies of extremely small jīvas; These infinitely small jīvas exist in my body as separate entities (from myself) ; again, all these bodies taken together is regarded as the body of a particular jīva, namely, "I". The entire Universe is also

constituted in this two-fold combination. Every particle of dust on the Earth surface is distinct; and yet all these particles taken together constitute a single entity, namely, the Earth; these dust particles are only parts of the Earth. Hence, just as innumerable objects have appeared as particular entities through combinations so, as wholes too, an infinite number of objects have been manifested. It has been stated before, that by the combination of twenty-two tattvas beginning with Ahaṁkāra the cosmos has manifested itself in an infinite multiplicity of forms, and when combined with "Buddhi-tattva" it is called Brahmāṇḍa. Hence, combinations of tattvas as wholes (totalities) being infinitely numerous and the Buddhi, being associated with all of them, the number of Brahmāṇḍas too is infinite.

The Brahmāṇḍa to which this Earth of ours and all living beings inhabiting it belong is divided into three layers (levels). Every layer is called a "Loka" (realm). Of these, the lokas which belong to the first layer and are dominated by sattva-guṇa are designated svarloka or svarga. (celestial realms). According to the progressive predominance of sattva-guṇa the svarloka has five levels. The lowest of these is specially designated "svarloka", and the names of the realms (lokas) above it are (in an ascending order) : "mahar", "jana", "tapar" and "satya". "Maharloka" is also called "Prajāpati-loka" and the other three "lokas" (above it) are "Brahma-loka". Those who inhabit these celestial realms are gods and goddesses of a high order. "Bhuvarloka" which is the second layer (below) is designated "antarīkṣa-loka" ; this "loka" too is the abode of various gods and goddesses, ṛṣis, gandharvas (semi-divine beings), bhūtas and pretas (ghosts and departed spirits, piśācas - species of malevolent demons) and so on, the third layer is constituted by the "Bhūrloka" (the terrestrial realm) along with the seven nether worlds (pātālas) beginning with "atala" and the seven "narakas" (infernal realms, hells) is the abode of mortal human being and other deities, "daityas" and "dānavas" (species of demons), "nāgas" (serpent-devils) animals,

birds, insects and flies and so on. "Bhurloka" is defined as the region which is illuminated by the sun. The jīvas in whom sattva-guṇa is dominant are called "devas" or "devatās" ; the jīvas in whom rajoguṇa predominates are called "asuras" and tamas-dominated jīvas are described as rākṣasas, piśācas and so on. Among human beings all these three categories are found. Those human beings in whom "deva-bhāva" (divine-nature) is present are endowed with the following innate qualities : control of the mind and the senses, endurance (titikṣā), practise of austerities (tapasyā), truthfulness (satya), kindness (dayā), contentment (tuṣṭi), detachment (vairāgya), liberality in giving (dāna), simplicity (śaralāṭā), self-discipline (vinaya) and self-delight (ātma-rati). The innate characteristics of human beings in whom rajoguṇa predominates, are : extreme covetousness, worship of the gods for mundane benefits, vanity, eagerness for fighting, longing for celebrity, fondness for praise and so on. The natural attributes of tamas-dominated people are : anger, avarice, duplicity, violence (himsā), the habit of asking for things, deception, quarrelsomeness, melancholy (śoka), delusion or infatuation (moha), indolence, meanness, fear and so on. Hence, human nature being diverse, the actions and practices human beings resort to for their advancement are also different. The ṛṣis have enjoined separate duties and practices that are suitable for all categories of human beings. According to the (moral and spiritual) states human beings attain as a consequence of following these codes of conduct (dharma) the nature of their passage to other worlds after death (paraloka) is determined.

(20) Innumerable gods and goddesses dwell in the above-mentioned celestial realms and when worshipped by man they do immense good to human beings. These gods are divided into eleven categories ; these eleven deities have been described as the indwelling (presiding) deities of the eleven indriyas. It is the worship of these deities that have been

specially mentioned in the Vedic "karma-kāṇḍa". In "Bhūrloka", "Antarīkṣa-loka" and "svarloka"—in all these three worlds (lokas) they operate in various visible forms. It is for this reason that, multiplying eleven by three, the number of categories of gods (and goddesses) have also been mentioned by the śāstras as thirty-three. These eleven categories of Vedic deities will now be described. It has already been stated that at the beginning (of Creation) the Mahābhūta "Ākāśa" is created, and its guṇa (characteristic quality) is "śabda-tanmātra" ; but even in this "Ākāśa", Puruṣa (dr̥k-śakti) is inherent ; hence, Ākāśa with śabda-guṇa as its essence, is conceived as the body of the Puruṣa. The Puruṣa embodied in the Ākāśa is designated the goddess "Dik". It is for the reception of the śabda, which is the guṇa of this "dig-devatā" that the first cognitive sense-organ "śrotra" (the sense-organ of hearing) appears. In the śāstras this śrotrendriya (auditory sense-organ) has been called "adhyātma", its object, "śabda", adhibhūta, and the devatā named "Dik", which activates the śrotrendriya, "adhidaiva". Thus, the characteristic quality (guṇa) of the "Mahābhūta" called "Marut" is "sparśa" (touch) ; the Puruṣa endowed with this sparśa-guṇa is called the "Vāyu" devata or the devatā named "Vidyut". When "Marut" is perceived as only something that is visible, is referred to as inanimate (jaḍa) second "Mahābhūta" ; nevertheless, "dr̥k-śakti" is present even in that ; so, he too is a jīva (devatā). In order that the tactual sensation may be received, the devatā named "Vāyu" or Vidyut manifests the cognitive sense-organ (jñānendriya) called "tvac", hence the indriya, "tvac" is called adhyātma, its object, the tactual quality (sparśa-guṇa, adhibhūta and the "devatā" called Vāyu or Vidyut "adhidaiva". Thus, again "cakṣus" (the visual sense-organ) is called adhyātma, "rūpa" (form), "adhibhūta" and the devatā called "Arka" the Sun with "tejas" as his body, adhidaiva ; again, "rasanā" (the gustatory sense-organ) is called adhyātma, "rasa" (taste) adhibhūta, Varuṇa, adhidaiva; nāsikā (the alfactory sense-organ) is called adhyātma, "gandha" (smell), adhibhūta and the twin-gods—Aśvinīkumāras,

adhidaiva. In the same manner, again, the presiding deity of the karmendriya called "vāc" (organ of speech) is Vahni ; hence, "vāc" is adhyātma, speech (vākya) adhibhūta, Vahni, adhidaiva ; pāṇi (the prehensive organ) is adhyātma, the object to be grasped (grāhya), adhibhūta, the god Indra, adhidaiva ; "pāyu" (the organ of ejection), adhyātma, the object to be ejected, adhibhūta, Upendra, adhidaiva ; "pāda" (the organ of locomotion) is adhyātma, the (place of) destination (gantavya), adhibhūta, Mitra, adhidaiva ; "Upastha" (the genital organ) adhyātma, ānanda (delight) adhibhūta, and Prajāpati adhidaiva. These five devatās are the presiding deities of the five karmendriyas beginning with "vāc". The presiding deity of "Manas" is "Candramas" (the moon god). "Manas" is adhyātma, "mantavya" (the object of thought), adhibhūta, Candramas, adhidaiva. These eleven deities have been particularly mentioned in the Vedas. The bodily frames (piṇḍas) in which these deities dwell and manifest their individual distinctive powers derive their names from those of the indwelling gods (or goddesses). For instance, in this "Bhūrloka" the Sun (Sūrya) is the deity (devatā) called Arka, Candra (the moon) is the deity candramas, the "Dikpāla (guardian of a particular quarter of the sky) is the devatā (god) called Indra. Among all the indriyas, Manas is the supreme, and it is only in combination with manas that the indriyas like "vāc" become capable of functioning ; hence the realm (loka) permeated by Manas is distinctively mentioned as the supreme Indra-loka. Above it are situated the primal "Prajāpati" lokas that are constituted of Ahaṁ-tattva and above them are situated the Brahma-lokas which are constituted of pure Knowledge. It should be noted however that in the body of every jīva all the cosmic principles (tattvas), beginning with "Mahat" and ending in Kṣiti are present ; hence, parts of all the deities with these tattvas as their bodies are present in every "jīva-deha" (the body of a jīva). Through specific mantras and specific acts (rites) the powers of the parts of these deities are increased and as a result, these presiding deities of the various tattvas, being attracted by

these (mantras and rites), increase various super-natural (occult) powers of the sādḥaka. However, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva (Mahādeva) are not to be regarded as ordinary deities; they have been described each of them in all the Purāṇas as the supreme Divine (Īśvara) in comparison with the other deities. It is the "Buddhi-tattva" which is constituted of pure knowledge in which they have their dwelling place. In the part of the Buddhi-tattva dwells Viṣṇu, in the rajas part, Brahmā and in the tamas portion Śiva (Mahādeva). These celestial abodes (of the Trinity) are eternal, free from avidyā (ignorance) and filled with Bliss. When the gods are violently oppressed by the demons (asuras) they generally take refuge (as suppliants) in only these supreme Deities and it is these latter who, manifesting themselves by assuming some form accomplish their divine mission; and after establishing the Law of Truth (satya-dharma) are known to all the worlds as avatāras (divine incarnations).

(21) The manner in which the Creative process is brought about is the same in which it (the created cosmos) is dissolved in due course. Just as the Almighty God (who is named in the Purāṇas Vāsudeva, Nārāyaṇa and so on) after creating this wonderful cosmos by calling into play His guṇas, renders every particular object in it capable of being enjoyed by the jīva-śakti, so in due course again, by wholly withdrawing (into Himself) the guṇas and thus merging them (the jīvas) in Himself makes them enjoy His own natural bliss (ānanda). The creation (expansion), Maintenance and Dissolution (withdrawing into Himself - saṁsāra) is only His "Līlā" (cosmic play). This Līla is inherent in His nature ; thus the (created) cosmos comes into being over and over again and merges into Him over and over again. In this (cosmic process) there is no one else as His controller. As thus endowed with the power to create, sustain and dissolve the cosmos He is called "Kāla" (Time). The period covered by the four great Ages (yugas) Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali — and lasting for about 4.3 million years, is called a Mahāyuga, a thousand such

Mahāyugas constitute a "kalpa". The period of one kalpa is reckoned as one day of Brahmā and it is also reckoned one night of Brahma. Reckoning one whole day (twenty four hours) as constituted by one day and one night (added together), such 360 whole days of Brahmā make up a year (samvatsara) of Brahmā. On such a reckoning the life span of Brahmā is 2×10^{10} million years. At the close of a cosmic day of Brahmā the entire cosmos from "Ahaṁ-tattva" to "Kṣiti-tattva" merges in Hiraṇyagarbha Brahmā ; He (Brahmā) then remains lying in the unmanifest (avyakta) Prakṛti. At the close of the cosmic night, again, awakening, He manifests Himself and the entire Cosmos. At the end of Brahmā's life-span He becomes indissolubely fused with the essential nature of Parabrahman and along with Him the Brahmāṇḍa which belongs to Him (as an integral part) also turns into the very essence of Brahman-nature. (Brahma-rūpatā). Nevertheless, the "saṁmatva" of Brahman is eternal (nitya) ; hence, the creative power of Brahman too is eternal and infinite. It is only in relation to the Brahmāṇḍa to which we ourselves belong that the creative process and nature of the world around us have been discussed here. It is necessary however to know that Brahmāṇḍas are infinite in number. But it is not necessary for us to speak specifically about other Brahmās and Brahmāṇḍas. This is why there is no specific reference to them in the śāstras ; all they (the śāstras) have told us is that the number of Brahmās and Brahmāṇḍas are infinite.

(22) All powers (śakti) which are causes, after producing the effects, suffer fatigue; all living creatures after performing all their works during the day become inactive after the advent of night and go to sleep ; awakening again in due course, they, by means of their power of action (called into play by rajoguṇa) resume their activities. Hiraṇya-garbha Brahmā also after accomplishing the act of creation becomes languid at the end and overcome by slumber. When Brahmā undergoes the condition of "suṣupti" (deep sleep) all other jīvas merge in Him and attain His nature. When Brahmā drops into sleep He

becomes merged in Prakṛti; it is this condition of being merged in Prakṛti that is His sleeping state. After His having attained this state of being "Prakṛti-līna" (merged in Prakṛti) the entire manifested cosmos, along with "Ahaṁ-tattva" disappears. Having attained this state of the "Prakṛti-līna", Hiraṇya-garbha remains as the pure contemplative power (dṛk-śakti). All the guṇas then, merged in this "dṛk-śakti", become unmanifest. Nevertheless, in that state a certain propensity to contemplate the guṇas as separate entities persists in Brahmā. The same is the condition of persons who are asleep ; in the state of sleep all indriyas (sense-organs) become unmanifest and being merged in a state of faint knowledge in the nature of the Puruṣa in the state of sleep become united with him ; nevertheless, they are not totally obliterated ; in the sleeping person, a inclination towards awakening remains ; it is this inclination (propensity) that is rajoguṇa. Although, in a sleeping person, the functions of the sense-organs are lost, this rajoguṇa, waiting for an opportunity for reappearance, keep accumulating its own strengths. When, thus, the strength of rajoguṇa increases, the sleeping person wakes up, and his sense-organs gradually resume their functions. It is the same with Brahmā; in His Prakṛti-līna state, rajoguṇa too is calmed ; but the seminal state (seed) of rajoguṇa does not disappear ; consequently, in due course, He reawakens and with the sprouting of rajoguṇa He resumes His act of Cosmic Creation.

(23) This cosmos constituted of twenty-five tattvas, viewed in its totality has been classified into four kinds by the śāstras. For instance: The manifested cosmos comprising the twenty-one tattvas— the eleven indriyas, the five tanmātras and the five Mahābhūtas— viewed in its totality as well as into its individual parts (objects), this is the first manifested state (of the cosmos) ; this is called "Viśva" (All), and the indwelling Puruṣa is called "Viśva" or "Virāṭ". This is the fully manifested state of the cosmos ; and the Puruṣa indwelling it can be likened to the waking state. The source (origin) of all these

twenty-one tattvas is "Ahaṁ-tattva". In Ahaṁ-tattva rajoguṇa is very strong ; hence the Puruṣa inherent in Ahaṁ-tattva is always eager and willing to perform the act of creation ; but when the Viśva — comparable to the waking state (jāgrat) that is the tattvas beginning with the indriyas and ending in Kṣiti — had not yet been created, the Puruṣa indwelling Ahaṁ-tattva has only this propensity (to create) ; this is the reason why this state has been referred to by the śāstras as the second, "sleep-like" (svapna) state and the Puruṣa indwelling the Ahaṁ-tattva has been designated "taijasa" or "Pradyumna". When a jīva goes to sleep he begins at first to see dreams ; in this state, he cannot apprehend objects as he does in the waking state ; and yet, having not had the state of "suṣupti" (deep, dreamless sleep), the desire for the perception of objects is also not totally obliterated; hence, he has faint impressions of objects as seen in dreams. Similarly, this cosmos is not wholly intelligible to the Puruṣa dwelling in Ahaṁ-tattva ; for, at that time, it had not yet appeared ; but His desire to manifest it is present. This is precisely the reason why the Puruṣa indwelling Ahaṁ-tattva is called "taijasa", and Ahaṁ-tattva the sleeping state of the cosmos. In like manner, the pure Buddhi-tattva has been characterized as the state of "suṣupti" of the cosmos and the Puruṣa called Hiraṇya-garbha indwelling it as "prājñā" in the sense— endowed with full knowledge; prajñā (supreme knowledge) is His natural and distinctive characteristic. When the sādḥaka, by virtue of His sādḥana, becomes established in this stage of Prajñā (prajñā-bhūmi) he is called "prājñā". A person endowed with sāttvika nature it is true, remains in contact with "prajñā-bhūmi" during "suṣupti"; nevertheless, he cannot be (permanently) established in this state of prajñā. When awakened, he lapses from it. This bhūmi (stage) has not been mastered by him. But the yogin, possessing the wealth of sādḥana, renouncing totally all desire for sense-enjoyments and withdrawing all the sense-organs from their objects becomes established in the natural state of pure, unalloyed knowledge; hence, he attains full mastery over this

prajñā-bhūmi. Unlike the person experiencing the state of suṣupti, it does not remain beyond his will or active control. The sense-organs and their objects can trouble him no longer; consequently, his mind (citta) becomes blissfully serene (prasanna). It is while experiencing this spiritual state that he becomes the subject of such utterances of the Gītā as the following :

“brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṃkṣati” (the person, having thus been established in the Being of Brahman (kārya-Brahman or Hiraṇya-garbha) becomes blissfully serene ; he does not grieve for anything, nor does he desire anything.) The “Prakṛti-līna” (merged in Prakṛti) state mentioned earlier is beyond the three states of “viśva”, “taijasa” and “prājña” ; in this state, the guṇas become merged in dṛk-śakti (Puruṣa) ; this state of the guṇas merged in “dṛk-śakti”, in other words, the state of Saṃkarṣaṇa. This state can be characterized as that of being “Prakṛti-līna” as well as that of the Puruṣa. For, in this the three guṇas are not totally annihilated ; they remain unmanifest, in the seminal state (bīja-bhāva). It may therefore be also described as the state of Prakṛti. At the same time, again, dṛk-śakti too (Puruṣa) is never absent ; hence, it can also be described as the state of the Puruṣa (puruṣāvasthā). The state of dualism (dvaita) in the Puruṣa, which is the root cause of suffering (kleśa), becomes then unmanifest ; for no second object of knowledge then exists. The guṇas in the “seed” (seminal) state remain one with dṛk-śakti (Puruṣa); hence this state can be characterized as both “Puruṣa” and “Prakṛti”.⁴³

⁴³ It is for this reason, in the Bhagavadgītā, after first describing both the “jīva” (Puruṣa) and the “jagat” constituted of guṇas as Prakṛti (in śloka 7.4 and 7.5), again, in śloka sixteen of Chapter fifteen they have both been called “Puruṣa”. In Sāṃkhya Philosophy also, after first explaining the nature of Puruṣa and that of Prakṛti in various ways later, while concluding after affirming that bondage (bandha) belongs only to Prakṛti

Just as the jīva, attains the state of pure Buddhi-tattva during "suṣupti" and yet lapses from it when awakened so Hiraṇya-garbha Brahmā too, remains while lying asleep, in the state of Prakṛti-tattva ; in that state all his sense of dualism disappears, as has been stated before ; he attains then, therefore, a blissful state. Just as during suṣupti, the mental functions flowing, in a subtle state and uninterruptedly cause delight to the jīva in that state (of suṣupti) and consequently feels, when awakened, that he was in a state of bliss, so, in the lying (sleeping) state of Brahmā too, the sense of difference (dualism) which is the primal cause of suffering, disappears; so He attains a state of supreme bliss. However, when awakened, lapsing from this state He is roused from slumber and starts the process of Creation; this too has already been stated ; hence, the blissful state He experiences while lying (in sleep) is not subject to His will. But, the sādhakas, being established in the prajñā-bhūmi in the manner mentioned before and becoming fully settled in samādhi by adopting the sādhana enjoined by the sadguru, are able to attain this state of unbounded bliss as an assured and abiding possession and finally, become one with Parabrahman. This is the state of the "kevala" (absolutely one's true self) or the "mukta" (liberated). Once this state is attained (by them), they never again lapse from it; hence, they are no longer involved in the actions of the (three) guṇas.

(24) When, after being free from all sense of difference from the Parabrahman, the mind becomes pure one has realization of his true nature; this is the state of supreme liberation (mokṣa). The spiritual effort (sādhana), after knowing the nature of the jagat, the jīva and

and, further, that it is Prakṛti which brings about her own release from bondage, has demonstrated in other words the fundamental identity of "jīva" and Prakṛti. It is, in the ultimate analysis, the transmutation of these constituents of the subtle body (sūkṣma-deha) into the essential nature of Parabrahman that is true liberation (mukti). When this transmutation into Brahman-nature (of the constituents of the subtle body) occurs, the distinction between the viewer and the viewed (draṣṭā and dṛśya is ended ; there no longer exists therefore any separate entities like Puruṣa and Prakṛti.

Parabrahman, for the attainment of mokṣa has been called Brahmavidyā in the śāstras. This sādhana is of many kinds; one should learn it from the (mouth of) sadguru according to one's innate capacity and natural competence (adhikāra). Nevertheless, speaking generally, it is analysed into three categories. Meditation on the jīvātman (that is, as his own self, by the sādhanaka) as the all-transcendent Parabrahman is the first part (stage) of Brahmavidyā. Some engage in sādhana by adopting this single element (or aspect); they are called jñāna-yogins. Knowing one's Self (Ātman) as distinct from the visible world of objects, to meditate on the pure absolute (nirguṇa) essence of the Ātman— this is what is known as jñāna-yoga. Meditation on the entire Cosmos as Parabrahman— this is the second part (aspect) of Brahmavidyā . In order to be settled in this sādhana, the sādhanaka has to concentrate on the principal (divine) manifestations (vibhūti) of Brahman. One has for instance, to engage in meditation by making Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Sūrya, Ākāśa, Manas as their objects (of meditation) and thus conceiving them as Brahman (Himself), that is to say attributing to them the qualities like omnipotence, omnipresence and the all-controlling immanence of the Divine. Meditation on the images of divine incarnations (avatāra) is also included in this part (aspect). Meditation on Parabrahman as transcending both the world of jīvas and the world of (physical) objects— this is the third part (aspect) of Brahmavidyā . It is only after the sādhana relating to the first two parts becomes fully accomplished that sādhana regarding this third part (stage or aspect) is fully called into play. All these three parts or aspects are included in complete Bhaktiyoga. However, this Brahmavidyā does not become steady and firm unless one receives the power (śakti) of the sadguru. It is only when the sadguru instils into the disciple "sādhanā-śakti" (spiritual force that enables one to practise sādhana successfully) by means of mantra-śakti (the power of mantra) this Vidyā becomes a permanent possession. Hence, mantra-sādhana, that is, the japa (mentally muttering) of mantras like the sacred 'OM',

(praṇava) rendered potent and sanctified by the sadguru and pondering its meaning is - as has been declared by all the śāstras and all categories of sādhakas - the initiating and nourishing force and an abidingly integral part of the afore-mentioned three-fold sādhana. As a matter of fact, it is the subtle sound that is the first "tāmasika vikāra" (mutation) of Ahaṁ-tattva and the finest state of the external visible world and hence, to take recourse to Śabda is extremely useful. This subject will be discussed more elaborately at the concluding section of this book.

CONCLUSION

It has stated before that Brahman is complete (pūrṇa) by both His saṁguṇa and nirguṇa aspects and in the sense that He is pūrṇa (in the sense of "pūrṇam anena sarvaṁ"— all this is filled by Him) Parabrahman is also called "Puruṣa" ; nevertheless being superior to all other Puruṣas He has been characterized as "Uttama Puruṣa" (the supreme Person). The omnipotent Parabrahman manifests the earlier-mentioned cosmos comprising the twenty-four cosmic principles (within Prakṛti) from Himself. The jīva-śakti of Brahman by sustaining it both as particular individuals and in its totality in the form of "Ahaṁ" ("I") and assuming these cosmic forms is impelled incessantly in this phenomenal world (saṁsāra) and, also, towards striving for liberation (mokṣa-sādhana). On account of the fact that he resides in the abode (puri) made of guṇas, the jīva too, is called Puruṣa ("puri śete iti Puruṣaḥ"— he is called Puruṣa because he lies in the fortress which is the body); Bhagavān, who is the Uttama-Puruṣa too, as the inner controller of the jīvas and the prime Mover and ultimate Ground of all cosmic activities is immanent everywhere. Hence Puruṣa is of two kinds : (1) Uttama-Puruṣa, who is omniscient, omnipresent and the Supreme Lord (Īśvara) ; (2) The jīva who is not omniscient, who is not all-pervasive, and therefore, distinct and particular consciousness (caitanya). Īśvara being eternally poised in His true

self (svarūpa), He is perennially free; He is shorn of the sense of difference (dualism) regarding the external world which is caused by ignorance (avidyā). As has been pointed out earlier, in the first Jīva of the cosmos, Hiraṇya-garbha too, self-knowledge is not present; hence, though endowed with the knowledge of the manifested cosmos, He is not All-knowing (pūrnajña). Īśvara, on the other hand, is All-knowing (omniscient) — He is, that is to say, the eternal Spectator of all visible forms and actions in the Universe, manifested in the past, the future and the present. Just as He remains as the Spectator, Cognizer and Witness of the Creation of the manifested cosmos, beginning from "Mahat" and ending in "Kṣiti", so, at the final Dissolution of the cosmos, when the entire Universe becomes merged in the primal Prakṛti, which is Brahman's "Śakti" (power) Īśvara remains the Spectator of even this state of Dissolution ("līnāvasthā"), and when later, Creation starts afresh, the contemplator of that too is Parameśvara. This cycle of Creation, continuance and Dissolution has been going on from beginningless (anādi) Time. Parameśvara, being the witness of all and the Knower of the past, present and the future simultaneously He remains as the eternal Spectator of all these ; hence, the power of Time ceases (to exist) in Him. Time is determined by the incompleteness of knowledge. I have the knowledge of some objects or events ; not of other objects or events ; I come to know these latter afterwards ; thus, it is through this sequence or succession of knowledge that time is apprehended. If however, knowledge of everything is present in me all the time — eternally, no such thing as time can exist ; the power of time which manifests itself through the knowledge of sequence — one event following another in succession— becomes extinguished therefore with the disappearance of this sequence in our knowledge ; hence, in Parameśvara who is omniscient, Time ceases to operate. The omniscience of Parameśvara has been affirmed by all the śāstras— Śruti, Smṛti, Purāṇa and Tantra. All sampradāyas (sects) of sādhakas in India acknowledged this and it is also

admitted by the people belonging to the religious communities of other countries. Nevertheless, unless there is constant knowledge of all kinds of objects and events manifested in an infinite variety of ways in the past, the future and the present the term "omniscient" becomes meaningless. Hence, Parameśvara is Trikālajña (the knower of the three times— past, present and future). It is not that this omniscience of His is known only through the śāstras. Many Persons in this land (India) have, through the practice of Yoga become relatively omniscient and thus knowing the past, the present and the future have, from time to time, revealed events occurring in all the three times. It has been stated — as the tradition goes — that many thousands of years before the birth of Śrī Rāmachandra, Maharṣi Vālmīki had produced the epic Ramāyāna which gives us a full account of all the divine acts (kṛtā) of Śrī Rāmachandra. In the Purāṇas, narration of future events is often found. The events of all the ages, irrespective of the sequence of time have been related equally in any book composed by a ṛṣi in no matter which period of time; hence, it is not possible to determine the time of the book's appearance by reading the events narrated in it. Great spiritual personalities (Mahāpuruṣas) are still alive in India who, if graciously inclined, reveal to their devoted disciples (who serve them) distant or future events transcending space and time.

Even when examined by the higher intelligence this kind of omniscience does not seem impossible. Astrologers, by resorting to Astrological calculations sometimes foretell future events with considerable accuracy. Scientists (meteorologists) acquire knowledge of storms and rains in advance; nevertheless, this knowledge of theirs is, indeed, of the most ordinary kind; how the clouds will form, how long and how heavy or light the rainfall will be, the duration of the storm and the effect such an event would have the men of science have not yet been able to determine perfectly, it is true; an exceedingly small part of all the

forces that are moving the world have been discovered by these western scientists. But if any person acquires knowledge of all these forces, can there exist any sort of doubt that he will be able to ascertain the past, the present and the future regarding specific events?

That through Yogic power a person's visual, auditory and other faculties can be heightened has already been mentioned. Many Scientific investigators have recorded how patients suffering from hysteria have sometimes been able to read a book placed at their back with their eyes shut. Such patients have sometimes described future events by visualizing them and these predictions have subsequently been verified. Some persons, in their dreams, sometimes have visions of future events, unknown persons and unfamiliar places; subsequently, these events have been known to have actually occurred (and the persons and places seen turned out to be real). It cannot therefore be denied that even without the help of the physical eye, the visual organ, objects and events distant in both space and time can be perceived by the visual faculty of man. In hysterical patients this power is manifested in a small measure. If this is so, what reason is there to dismiss as utterly impossible the notion that when this power is immensely increased through appropriate sādhanā, all these worlds can be objects of visual perception? Nowadays medical men are able to observe bodily organs which are not perceptible to the eye, by means of scientific instruments. The ṛṣis, could, by means of sādhanā transform and improve the constituents of the visual organ itself to such an extent — and can do this even today — that no object can obstruct their vision. Hence, the statement in the śāstras to the effect that they are able to know external objects and events irrespective of distances in time and place cannot be repudiated as wholly impossible even by rational arguments. If in this way, with the increase of our visual, auditory and other faculties, the knowledge of the forces operating in the cosmos is greatly increased, how can it be concluded that it is quite impossible for past and future events to be perceived as vividly

as present occurrences? Hence, the assertion in the śāstras that Parameśvara, the Primal Cause of the cosmos and the ultimate source of all cosmic forces is eternal, knower of the three times and beyond time, turns out to be valid even on rational grounds.

Just as the power of time (kāla-śakti) is non-existent in Īśvara and cannot therefore constitute an impediment to His eternal omniscience, so even distance in space cannot detract from His omniscience. For, it is the succession of perceptions that gives rise to knowledge of space. When successive sensations are cognized as a continuous flow of sensations the perception of "distance" is generated and when several perceptions are presented simultaneously, the knowledge of space and spatial dimensions occurs. This matter has been referred to before in explaining the genesis of "Marut-tattva" and "sparsēndriya" (tactual sense-organ). Hence, spatial perception being subject to temporal perception and in the omniscient Parameśvara, even the power of time being extinguished, even distance in space cannot hinder His omniscience. But the feeling we have that the world of external objects are different from us and also among themselves is due to the fact that they are separated by distance in space and time; once this separation in space and time is removed, a sense of difference becomes impossible. That Īśvara, in particular, is all-pervading is admitted by all religious scriptures. It will therefore be clear, if one ponders the matter deeply that by virtue of this omniscience of Īśvara, His non-dualism (advaitattva) too is established and this is what has been revealed by Śruti, Smṛti and all other śāstras.

Nevertheless, the term "omniscient" does not mean only knowledge of all things; this term has been used in the śāstras in a much wider sense. It is not merely that in Parameśvara, there exists knowledge of all kinds spreading over all the three times is also included in this word— "sarvajña" (omniscient). Just as Īśvara is fully cognizant (purnajña), having abiding knowledge of all matters, so, on the other hand, He always remains also cognizant

of particular objects. Just as He is the eternal Spectator of the entire cosmos, so, by dividing the cosmos in an infinite number of separate entities and by entering them in infinite numbers and various ways and by virtue of His power of Time contemplates them as separate and distinct particulars. The power by virtue of which He, though one and All-seeing, (in the total vision of the cosmos) contemplates the infinitely various cosmic entities He has created as separate and distinct particulars—it is this power (śakti) which is called “Mahāmāya” or “Māyā” ; and it is this “Māyā-śakti” which has been designated before śakti as “Puruṣa” (jīva) and “Prakṛti”.⁴⁴ The separate and distinct contemplating parts of the All-seeing Īśvara or Uttama-Puruṣa which for specific and distinct visions enter the visible Prakṛti and its evolutes, are called jīvas. The jīva therefore is an incomplete knower ; he is a particular portion of Īśvara; one who is eternally omniscient is called Īśvara and in those portions of Him through which He contemplates the world as separate particulars are called jīvas.

This matter is being explained now somewhat by an example. Many have seen the machine called “bioscope”. By this mechanical device past events, as they occurred in temporal succession—one after another—are seen exactly as if they were happening just now. For instance — a group of soldiers arrive on one side of a river equipped with fire-arms (guns and canons), construct a bridge quickly across the river, and then begin to cross the river along this bridge fortified with artillery; enemy soldiers on the other side of the river start shelling, some jump into the river, the surface of the river becomes ruffled;

⁴⁴ In the śāstras it is true, it is Prakṛti that has been called, in some places, Māyā-shakti ; what it really signifies is merely that it is only on account of the Prakṛti being manifested in different forms that jīvas appear and perceive by identifying themselves with the Prakṛti; this sense of separation does not exist before cosmic manifestation.

the soldiers at last reaching the other side (of the river) start firing and shelling and so on. Though these events took place long ago they are now seen through this device just as a person standing on the bank of the river would have done at the actual time of their occurrence. The photographic images of these events as they happened one after another were taken by this machine and preserved; afterwards, by operating this machine, these photographic images are exhibited in the proper sequence in such quick succession that the images, one quickly following another, appear to be taking place as if they are present events. In the same manner, all kinds of events in the entire universe are established (fixed) in Brahman like a picture; the cosmic wheel called "Kāla-śakti" (the power of Times) being perpetually attached to it is incessantly turning round and round ; this is how the pictures of this world are being exhibited separately and one after another to the jīva. The power (śakti) by virtue of which Brahman is viewing these pictures one after another is "Jīva śakti", and He who contemplates eternally, the entire cosmos at the same time as the object of His knowledge, is Īśvara. This is how the difference between the jīva and Īśvara should be understood. It is this jīva who has been characterised as "haṁsa" in the Śruti and referring to this "Wheel of Time" the Śruti says —"asmin haṁso bhrāmyate brahmacakre" (on this "Brahmacakra" the "haṁsa" is eternally made to rotate). To explain this dual-existence of the Puruṣa the Śruti declares:

dvā suparnā sayujā sakhāyā
samānaṁ vṛkṣaṁ pariśasvajāte,
tayo ranyaḥ pippalaṁ svādvattya
naśnannanyo'bhicākaśīti. (4.6)

samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno

anīśayā śocati muḥyamānaḥ,
juṣṭam yadā paśyatyanyamīśamasya
mahimānamiti vītaśokaḥ (4.7)

— (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad.

4th Chapter)

— two beautiful birds always associated together as companions remain dwelling in the same tree (as their common abode). Of these, one, after eating the fruit is enjoying its delicious taste; the other does not eat the fruits, but looks on with unconcern. Though dwelling in the same tree the bird who is the jīva (lured by the fruit) falls into the state of bondage, and being unable to deliver himself becomes bewildered and laments; later, when he, after adoring the other bird who is Īśvara attains Him and realizes His greatness, through this means he is freed from all sorrows and sufferings.

It will now be easily understood that the one and the same Brahman exists in three Forms (aspects): In the first Form (aspect) He is eternal, fully possessed of knowledge of everything (in the cosmos), beyond Time, the ground of All and Controller of all cosmic objects and events. It is this (Form) that the authors of the śāstras have mentioned as His essential Nature (svarūpa). In this state He is called Parabrahman or Īśvara. The second (Form), Brahman as jīva, contemplates Himself as infinitely diverse, separate (particular) entities. This vision (of particulars), being infinitely various and diverse, contributes to His Fullness; hence, jīvas too are infinite in number. Thirdly, He as visible objects of the jīva-śakti, this infinitely diverse cosmos. It is Brahman again, who, manifesting Himself as the visible cosmos contemplates it, through His jīva-śakti, as endlessly diverse. It is Parabrahman who, transcending these two states, has the power of co-ordinating and controlling the latter states of jīva; it (this power) cannot exist in either of these two; hence,

Parabrahman truly deserves to be called Īśvara, being endowed, as He is, with divine power (aiśī-śakti). Nevertheless, it is necessary to realize that it is on account of His active involvement in the cosmic manifestation that this status of Him as "Īśvara" is established. But, all cosmic entities and phenomena, manifested in the three times (past, present and future) being eternally established in His essence (svarūpa), He is, in this fullness of His Being, absolutely non-dual (advaita); in this Form (aspect) therefore, there neither is nor can be any question of activity (kriyā) of any kind. It is also true that He brings about the great cosmic Event (Creation, Maintenance and Dissolution). Hence, omnipotence (that is Īśvara) and absolute non-dualism (advaitattva) — it is by taking into both these aspects the essential nature (svarūpa) of parabrahman is described.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ On account of the endless diversity of the "jīva-śakti", some jīvas are able to comprehend this Brahma-vidyā, some are not. He who has known this Brahma-vidyā, strives in his heart to meditate in his essential nature that he is one with Parabrahman and that the entire cosmos along with all jīvas are so. Through such meditation, gradually he begins to experience "samadarśana" (equality of vision) everywhere; consequently, he becomes detached from joy and sorrow, loss or gain and continues to view the "saṁsāra" (the world of phenomena) as only a play-field. He begins to perceive that Brahman, by assuming the form of the jīva, is contemplating and enjoying himself as an infinite multiplicity of forms. In this wonderfully diverse Creation there is absolutely no partiality on the part of God; He is Himself divinely playfull — "līlāmaya" — it is He Himself who is playing in infinitely diverse manifestations. And with the increase of such constant knowledge the mind of the sādḥaka becoming free from malevolence, rancour and delusion and so on attains the unfathomable profundity of the sea and attains the concentrated one-pointedness of the flame of a lamp in a windless place; then the sense of division (and difference) caused by avidyā is totally dispelled and the sādḥaka attains his own Brahman-nature. Such is the mighty impact of "Brahma-vidyā" that the sādḥaka who has received this vidyā fully, becomes readily free from all kinds of indolence; knowing himself to be one with Brahman he does not refrain from undergoing immense trouble to become established in that Supreme Being. Let no one therefore delude himself into believing that Brahma-vidyā is a kind of inertness or incapacity for action.

All Jīvas are not fit to grasp it. If an unfit person learns it by mouth he may, sometimes indeed resort to it to justify his indolence and misdeeds in society; nevertheless, it is his character which, by disclosing his lack of equal-mindedness will betray his incapacity for conceiving this higher knowledge (vidyā) to the public; and those who are incapable of comprehending it, learn it only by mouth, and then impelled by their innate propensities, forgetting it all when it comes to actual life they will engage in actions that are congenial to their natural proclivities. This is why the ṛṣis have pronounced that the teaching of Brahma-vidyā to such people is utterly futile and wrong. It is only those who have a pure heart that are capable of learning Brahma-vidyā. What kind of people, by performing which kinds of actions can attain purity— this the divinely clear-sighted (divya darśin) ṛṣis have laid down in the "Smṛti Śāstras"; therefore, to perform these actions earnestly and intelligently is desirable in every way.

(1) Nevertheless, there are some who object to this; for, according to them, having affirmed that all jīvas are portions of Brahman and all cosmic goings-on are eternally established in Brahman and all mental phenomena of human beings are all strictly subject to laws and inevitable and all efforts for doing something become futile; no one then, has the slightest responsibility for any act of his, and the distinction between virtue and sin and all causal relations are obliterated. Hence, if this view set forth in the Hindu Śāstra is widely disseminated, it will only do harm to the world; such a doctrine therefore can never be right.

But if one ponders the matter deeply it will be easily understood that this objection is wholly untenable. It is indeed true that mental phenomena of human beings are just as subject to laws as external physical phenomena; just as external physical phenomena are connected by causal laws so are the mental phenomena of man. If one's son is kept in good company he will become good, if on the contrary, he is kept in evil company he will become bad. If, from childhood, one is taught under the tutelage of a good person one's mental faculties are highly developed; unless one is taught in this manner nothing of the kind will happen. No one will have any doubt that these notions which are so widespread in human society are correct. The penal code, which is current everywhere in human society—that too is a special form of lesson for the reform and development of the mind and disposition. Nevertheless, differences as a result of education occur due to attending circumstances and among the various factors in character formation education is only one; there cannot however be any doubt that education is an effective instrument in forming the frame of mind. But the moment this is admitted it has to be acknowledged that the mental operations of man are subject to causal laws; just as one material substance is transformed when brought into contact with another substance so the human mind too is transformed when brought in contact with other minds. That the external physical objects

act upon our minds is perceived by every human being everyday; our sense-organs have relations only with external physical objects and by this various mental phenomena are set in motion; besides, on reflection, it is seen that the mind of man too is an entity which is of the same kind as external physical objects. By taking some drugs a man turns mad; by taking drugs of other kinds a mad man becomes cured. If you drink too much, your mind will instantly assume a particular state; desist from it, nothing of the sort will happen. All these are controlled and set in motion by the food we take. That one's mental state depends to a considerable extent on one's physical condition is a matter of constant and universal experience. Nowadays, Western men of science suppose that from electrical energy all other material substances have been produced and it is also being demonstrated now that human will is capable of producing electrical phenomena. The ancient ṛṣis have pronounced unequivocally that the mind too is only a transformed state of matter. It must therefore be admitted that the human mind too belongs to the category of physical matters and is equally subject to laws that govern them. Further discussion regarding this subject is therefore unnecessary.

Mental goings on being thus subject to laws, and the mind too being a substance of the same kind as external physical objects, with the increase in knowledge of the forces that are co-operating in the cosmos, man has been able to predict about future physical; in a similar manner, there is a possibility of knowing future mental events. That through Astrology all future events, mental as well as physical of a man's life can be definitely ascertained in many cases is beginning to be demonstrated in the west also. Hence, when with the increase in knowledge of cosmic forces, it is possible to know future mental as well as physical events (of a man's life) equally well it must be admitted that all events are, in a sense inevitable and predetermined. It is precisely what the ṛṣis too have affirmed. There can be no doubt therefore that the statements of the ṛṣis are true. In the knowledge of the omniscient Parameśvara all events are eternally established; this has already been explained. That true knowledge can ever do harm in the end to man is a supposition which is baseless.

Nevertheless, on closely examining the matter it will become evident that the statement— "all cosmic phenomena are inevitable", does not mean that all efforts at action are ineffectual. Just as the event that will occur (in future) is already determined, so, the laws in accordance with which the actions to be performed (in temporal succession) are also determined beforehand; hence the view that "whether I do or do not perform some act the pre-ordained effect must come about"— is not correct; just as the fruit of the action is already determined, so is the activity that precedes it; that too must be done. The fruit (effect) will not appear independently of the preceding effort (to obtain it).

On the other hand the statement - "If this is so it has to be admitted that no one can be held responsible for all his actions" - is also not correct. This signifies merely that the fruit of an action is obtained by the person who performs it ; since he is the agent of the action. There is absolutely no contradiction between this view and the one mentioned before. Every Jīva gets the pre-determined fruits (of their actions) according to his actions which, too are pre-determined; it is perfectly true that the fruits of one's action is not obtained by another. Hence, the objection regarding responsibility too is untenable.

The objection to the effect that if this is so, there will be no distinction between virtue (puṇya) and sin (pāpa) too is trivial. The fruits of an action are not the same, they are infinitely various. The karma, the performance of which is destined to cause happiness in this or the other world is called "puṇya" (meritorious or virtuous act); the karma, the performance of which is known to have led to unhappiness in this or the other worlds is called "pāpa" (sinful act). The ṛṣis, having come to know which karma leads to which result, have characterized some karmas as "puṇya", some others as "pāpa". It is precisely because the results of actions are pre-determined that the appellations "pāpa" as "puṇya" are (truly) significant. The objection in this regard too, therefore is without substance.

The objection regarding the disappearance of all causal relations too is likewise unfounded. That a particular antecedent action is followed inevitably by another (subsequent) specific action is ordained by law ; hence, in the absence of the antecedent act, the subsequent one does not appear. These inviolable laws are called causal-relation. Hence, on account of the law-boundness and insurmountability of karma that the śāstras affirm the law of causality is not violated.

At the root of these objection there exists, in reality, another (inherent) concept; all these objections issue from that ; it is this : if every Jīva is forced to perform karma which is pre-determined in this manner, it is wrong to condemn him as if he were the agent of his actions ; for, if Parameśvara is the prime Agent of all karmas and if in all matters the real Agency is His alone, it is unjust for the Jīva to make him suffer the consequences (of his karmas). Indeed, if one reflects on this matter deeply this objection too will sound devoid of substance. For, it is as Jīva that Brahman does all karma ; hence, he should suffer the consequences of karmas only as Jīva. The Jīva is a portion (amśa) of Brahman ; there is no question therefore, of partiality. The portion in which Brahman performs karma and experiences its fruits is called Jīva. The Jīva is one (non-different) with Brahman. This Jīva-śakti of Brahman is eternal ; hence, karma too is beginningless ("anādi") and the "bhoga" of Jīva too goes back to time immemorial. This point I shall try to make more clear by an example. If, standing on the bank of the Ganga in Calcutta, if somebody wishes to know the source of the

Ganga, he will find that the Ganga had started flowing from Barahanagar; this is doubtless, true. Nevertheless, if he proceeds towards Barahanagar and stands there, he will find that the Ganga has come down from a far more distant place called Konnagar ; in this manner he will at last know the Himalayas to be the ultimate source of the Ganga. And yet, by saying that the Ganga has issued from the Himalayas does not imply that she has not come from Barahanagar at Calcutta; both statements are correct; coming down from Barahanagar is included in the descent from the Himalayas. In the same manner, the agency of the Jīva is included in the agency of the Īśvara ; the two are not mutually exclusive; since, the Jīva is subject to (the will and power of) Īśvara and only a portion of His. The karma of Jīva issues from Jīva, while the Jīva emanates from Īśvara and subject to Him ; if one knows this to be the essence of the matter there will be no doubt anymore regarding this point.

Even karmas like "upāsana" (worship and meditation) too are to be regarded as karma ; its fruitfulness too is regulated by law. Through karmas like upāsana the power of Brahman to bestow the fruits (of karmas) is aroused. This too is His law. Just as to impel the infinitely diverse Jīva-śakti towards karma is intrinsic to the essential nature of the Prime Cause Parabrahman, so, the power to bestow the fruits of these karmas too is intrinsic to the essence of that Prime Cause (ādi-kāraṇa). Nevertheless, He bestows these fruits through particular Jīva-śaktis.

Brahman, even while controlling the cosmos remains Himself immutable. In relation to Him, all this is only "līlā" (cosmic play). Lying in the same room, a hundred persons sees a hundred dreams; someone among them dreams, for instance, that he is fleeing in fear from a tiger; another, in his dream, screams in unbearable agony caused by disease; yet another, wearing on his head a royal crown enjoys various sumptuous luxuries in his dream. just as, if another person, remaining awake, happens to possess eyes that are capable of seeing all the activities of the dreamers in their dreams then, noticing the joys and sorrows of the dreaming persons is not deluded like them, so is the case with the Paramēśvara. Moreover, if those dream-viewers happen to be (like) parts of the waking person, or happen to be nothing but manifestations of his supernatural powers — then, the various karmas and experiences of "karma-phalas" (fruits of action) carried out by an infinitely large number of dreamers can be truly described as only the "līlā" (play) of the waking person, so, the entire cosmic process is only Brahman's "līlā". This līlā being eternally intrinsic to His very Essence, for this, He does not have to depend on any other cause and on account of this no flaws like partiality touch Him at all.

(2) The purpose of this book is only to explain the teachings of the śāstras— to ramify with elaborate arguments is not its intention ; it is only to help the reader in rightly comprehending the religious and spiritual message of the śāstras that the solutions of these objections have been briefly set forth. There are various atheistic schools of philosophy, that these are untenable the ṛṣis themselves have demonstrated in their philosophical discourses. It will be understood, by reading my "Philosophical Brahmidyā" ("Dārsanik Brahmadīdyā") here, only this much can be said briefly—

(A) That the Jīva is something other than the physical body the ṛṣis have demonstrated ; no one can disprove it. No one has been able to produce the "Jīvātman" through the combination of gross material substances; hence nobody has the right to affirm that the "Jīva-caitanya" has been produced by the combination of gross bodily substances. That the Jīva survives even after the decease of the physical body, that with the dissolution of the physical body the Jīva too does not dissolve, has been established by abundant direct evidences. Besides, some of us have also witnessed how departed souls have communicated with living persons. Similar incidents have occurred in many places, among all classes of people in all countries and in all times; they are occurring even today. The ṛṣis of old have told us how one can, by attracting departed souls communicate with them. By adopting these means some persons in India are fulfilling their wishes even today. Even in western countries many people, by the use of novel methods are becoming successful in this sphere. No one can prove on valid grounds that all are either liars or dupes. Those who, without investigating or practising the prescribed acts themselves stigmatize others as erroneous or mendacious through sheer egoism, can produce no evidence for the correctness or infallibility (of their statements ;) hence they are not credible to others. In matters that are not amenable to ordinary perception there is no reason to disbelieve in the statements of persons who have had special sādhana and aptitude regarding these (matters). If one who is known to be truthful in all other matters and is endowed with extraordinary intellectual power, gives out that he has himself experienced something in some special way, that is doubtful and as yet unrevealed (to others), how can it be rejected outright in the absence of evidence to the contrary? The ṛṣis of (ancient) India have openly and in one voice declared that with the destruction of the physical body the Jīva is not annihilated; it has been recorded in the śāstras that the ṛṣis, by invoking departed souls through their own power, made them visible to others; even today, many have got evidence to prove that there are some persons who are able to exhibit such powers. That, in modern times (comparatively) men like Śākya sīmha (the Buddha), Śaṁkarācārya, Guru Nanak, Gaurāṅga (Śrī caitanya), Jesus Christ, St Paul, Confucius, Mohammad and such others were men of immense intellectual power is

universally acknowledged and there are no differences of opinion as to the fact that all these men were truthfull, disinterested and seekers after truth ; if that is the case, what reason can be there to reject their unanimous testimony on this matter? It is well-known that there are many Indian yogins who can travel to other places after leaving their physical bodies behind while alive and they have clearly laid down (in writing) how others too develop such powers by following appropriate sādhanā. There is no reason therefore to give credence to the statements of those who disapprove of the existence of the Jīva distinct from the physical body.

(B) Every cell of the physical body is, after a certain period, changed ; our mental goings-on too are constantly changing; yet every human being feels that the "Jīva-caitanya" remains always unchangeable ; innumerable states of my own have passed, and yet "I" remain the same— this is confirmed by the self-experience of everybody. Had the Jīva-caitanya not been beyond the world of physical objects such self-conviction would not be possible. Moreover, that of all the atomic particles (cells) of my body not a single one will survive after a few years, has also been demonstrated by modern western science ; how, then and relying on which support, the memory of past events and the feeling of self-identity of the Jīva exist? On close reflection on this matter it will become clear that apart from the external physical body there are the subtle mind (manas) and the sense-organs, and it is by the support of these that memory exists. It is by means of this mind which transcends the physical body that our thinking faculty too is set in motion; it cannot therefore be denied that there exists, as the ṛṣis affirmed, apart from this physical body a subtle body (sūkṣma-deha) comprising manas and other constituents. Those who make out that the physical body is everything— there is nothing beyond it— may try to explain mental phenomena like memory, for instance by bringing out all sorts of baseless and unproved fancies ; but, they are never able fully to explain all these (mental phenomena) and the sense of self-identity that is seen as indivisible and unchangeable throughout all the incessant mental and physical changes in a man's whole life between birth and death cannot by any means be explained by pure materialism. This matter has been discussed more specifically in the previous Chapter as well as in other places. The materialistic view which holds that the Jīva-caitanya is not distinct from the world of matter is not acceptable. There is absolutely no ground for accepting this materialistic doctrine by ignoring the teachings of religious men.

(3) That unconscious Nature (Prakṛti) is not the primal cause behind the cosmic Process, that it is Īśvara who is the primal cause of the cosmos has been thoroughly demonstrated in the second section of Vedānta-Darśana (Brahma-Sūtra); hence, a specific discussion of this matter here is unnecessary and will be

a mere repetition ; speaking generally, it may only be pointed out here that there is absolutely no evidence against the Theistic view; besides, by argument alone, the existence of God cannot be definitively proved or disproved by direct-evidence; since, all arguments are usually based on direct perception; that perception is mostly sense-perception. Īśvara is beyond sense-perception ; hence, through arguments that are based on ordinary sense-perception the existence of God (Īśvara) can neither be proved or disproved with certainty. Nevertheless, ordinary sense-perception is neither favourable nor antithetical to the establishment of the existence of God ; all that can be established through argument and affirmed with certainty is that through this argument no one will be able to prove the non-existence of God. It has been demonstrated later in (my) philosophical discourse.

Those who are agnostics, who affirm neither the existence nor non-existence of God — to them I would like to submit that the view that the existence of God cannot be ascertained through argument alone is true. But arguments based on sense-perceptions alone is not the only means for ascertaining the truth. Appearing in specific periods the divine Power has revealed to persons who are distinguished by adherence to truth and mastery over the senses, the existence of God and the way of attaining Him and after being succesful in this by adopting the prescribed sādhana, those eminent persons, after having the vision of God became endowed with super-natural powers. There is no reason for rejecting their teachings in matters that are known to others. To those on the other hand who, by following their teachings follow a course of sādhana, to this day the veracity of these statements is evident. It is not rational therefore to turn indifferent, following the views of the agnostics, towards spiritual exercises like bhajana and upāsanā. Just as the Jīva-caitanya called 'I' being resident in my physical body, all the diverse activities of its various parts, though different from one another, subserve the purpose of the one whole ("I"), so, though this universe is apparently divided into innumerable parts this Jīva, as his knowledge increases, is able to know that all these (various parts) together serve the purpose of the one "caitanyamaya" (conscious) Puruṣa. That all the various parts of this infinite cosmos is strung together, so to speak, by the same system of Laws has now been demonstrated by Western science also. Just as, by observing an ordered system in the operations of every living body, the residence of a Jīva in each one of them can be known, so, the existence of Puruṣa as Infinite Consciousness dwelling in this Body constituted by an ordered cosmos can be easily conceived. So with the increase in the cultivation of knowledge it becomes clearly manifest that all the different activities performed by the Jīvas too are known collectively to serve a special purpose (of the Jīva). The inference that as the Controller of all Jīvas, there exists a "caitanyamaya Puruṣa" (Conscious Spirit) is insuperable. If the existence of such a Puruṣa is not

Now, after saying a few words about the difference between the jīva who is merged in Prakṛti (Prakṛti-līna) and the liberated soul (mukta-Puruṣa), I shall close this Quarter.

At the time of cosmic Dissolution (Mahāpralaya) the entire cosmos attains the state of unmanifest Prakṛti; consequently all jīvas at that time, owing to the disappearance of all visible objects, being merged in Brahman remain united with Him; but when Creation starts again, all jīvas, like persons awakened from sleep, become connected again with the subtle bodies, gradually assume gross (physical) bodies, enter the phenomenal world (saṁsāra) and begin, again, fresh activities. In the state of the "Prakṛti-līna" the body of the jīva which is constituted by the unmanifest Prakṛti is called "kāraṇa-deha" (the causal body); this body remains as one with unmanifest Prakṛti. Just as the water on the earth surface, heated by sun-rays become one with the invisible air; then condensing again, first turns into thin cloud, then cloud, and finally water falls on Earth and assumes its earlier state; the changes in the body of the jīva into gross, subtle and causal bodies also occur in a similar manner. In the state of Prakṛti-līna the jīvas remain indeed like liberated souls. For at that time, no specific visible objects exist. Nevertheless in that state the nature of Parabrahman as transcending the guṇas (guṇātīta), devoid of (any manifestation) of

accepted the phenomenon of different Jīvas to engage in their diverse activities in an organized and ordered manner unconsciously and the attainment of their respective fruits cannot be explained in any manner. Hence, inference based on sense-perceptions is in favour of the existence of this caitanyamaya Puruṣa who is beyond sense-perception. Therefore, inference too is entirely in consonance with the statement of great spiritual personalities upholding the existence of an all-pervading conscious Spirit. It is this Puruṣa who has been described in the śāstras as "Virāṭ" (the infinitely vast) ; when meditation on this Puruṣa called Virāṭ becomes ripe the worship of and meditation on Īśvara mentioned in the śāstras becomes relatively easier. After this happens, one is no longer assailed by doubts concerning the existence and nature of Īśvara. It is this "Virāṭ" Puruṣa who has been designated "Aniruddha" in the śāstras.

power and existing as the pure Ground, they are not at that time really regarded as liberated (mukta). Only, all visible objects being at that time merged in the unmanifest Prakṛti, they remain only as powers of "dṛk" (spectator). Nevertheless, the predisposition to see (perceive) if something visible presents itself remains in them; hence, when the creative process begins again, they again become involved in it.

Those souls, on the other hand who have liberated themselves, after following appropriate sādhana, completely suppressing all propensities tending outwards, towards "saṁsāra" (world of phenomena), become eternally established in Brahman, the Uttama-Puruṣa. Being freed from all worldly desires, unlike the jīvas in the Prakṛti-līna state, they do not have any latent propensity towards saṁsāra; hence, they, after being fully established in the supreme Divine (Parameśvara) the uttama Puruṣa becomes totally non-dualistic (in their temperament and outlook). And in that state, Brahman, (in His true Essence) as beyond the guṇas and the ultimate Ground of all Existence is revealed to them and even their subtle bodies (sūkṣma deha) too become (inextricably) fused with Brahman-nature; being thus eternally established in Brahman they are no longer subjected to bondage in the world of phenomena ; they too remain like Īśvara Himself, eternally in the dual status of "saṁguṇa" and "nirguṇa". Nevertheless, there is a difference between them and Īśvara ; it is this : Īśvara remains everlastingly the spectator and witness of all bodies and the entire cosmic process ; the liberated souls, on the other hand, though they are "Brahman-all-over" in their being, they exist as indwelling particular bodies constituted of Brahman's Being ; though they are suffused with Brahman-nature they are included in His true Nature ; it is these particular bodies of theirs that indicate their state of bondage (baddhāvasthā) previous to their release from it. It is for this reason that their omniscience too is relative ; their omniscience is dependent on meditation ; they are able to know anything the

moment they meditate upon it. But in the consciousness of Īśvara all things are known all the time ; not so with them. Brahmarṣis like Sanaka and Sananda, divine ṛṣis like Nārada, Paramahamṣas (astetics of the highest order) like Vyāsa and Śukadeva, are all liberated souls (mukta), and yet, they, from time to time appear before their adorers. Avatāras whose divinity has been proclaimed by all the śāstras and who are noted for their loving tenderness towards their bhaktas, like Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rāmachandra, Nṛsimha and so on, they too, from time to time appear before their bhaktas. Hence, though in the liberated state all sorts of self-identification with the body and sense of dualism are totally destroyed and the entire cosmos appears as Brahman, the bodies (of the liberated souls) are not wholly annihilated. That even a person while alive and in the physical body has achieved liberation has been mentioned in all the śāstras and the fact that it is possible for one to attain "mukti" even while alive has been affirmed in Śruti, Smṛti and all other śāstras. However, the physical bodies of the "jīvanmukta" puruṣas (persons who are liberated while alive) are dissolved in due course ; for the gross (physical) body is the accumulated product of the karmas of previous births ; hence, with the working out of this (prārabdha) karma through "bhoga" the gross body which is the outcome of this karma is dissolved. Nevertheless, with the rise of Knowledge, they are not in any way involved in the "bhoga" relations to their bodies. At the dawning of Brahman-knowledge they see Brahman everywhere. Hence, no karma related to their bodies can in anyway, obstruct their knowledge. Consequently even the desire to destroy their gross bodies does not arise in their minds; nevertheless, being totally unattached to all kinds of "bhoga" their continued residence in the gross body is only a kind of līla (play). After the dissolution of the gross body the constituents of their subtle body attain fully the nature of Brahman ; their existence as a part of Brahman is totally obliterated ; hence, even the final cosmic Dissolution cannot disturb them. The Blessed Lord has said in the Bhagavadgītā that "they

are not born at the time of Dissolution" (sarg'epi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca). Not being subjected to the laws of Creation and Dissolution, though their bodies are formed of natural (prākṛta) constituents, they are virtually super-natural (aprākṛta). All natural forms, before being manifested remain established in Parabrahman; they are manifested separately, later, through the Divine Power (aiśī-śakti) of Brahman ; that the subtle bodies of the dis-embodied liberated souls (videha-mukta), after attaining Brahman nature remain in Brahman's Being, is not to be wondered at. This is the reason why their bodies have been described by the śāstras in many places as super-natural (aprākṛta) and constituted of pure consciousness (cinmaya). For, their power of consciousness (citi-śakti) being never veiled (by ignorance) they remain, like Īśvara, always "cinmaya"; unlike souls in bondage (baddha-jīva) they have no sense of identification with and unlike Hiraṇyagarbha they have no sense of distinction from the body; moreover, unlike "Prakṛti-līna" souls after cosmic Dissolution, they do not have even a predisposition towards manifestation; they always remain in the state of advaita (non-dualism). After cosmic Dissolution, all other subtle bodies are hidden in unmanifest Prakṛti and reappear at the beginning of Creation; nevertheless, Parameśvara is the eternal Spectator of both cosmic Creation and Dissolution; to Him everything is eternal and included in His own Being; the same is true of liberated souls. Hence, in relation to them their bodies too are not liable to destruction; so, though merged in Prakṛti, they (their bodies) are invisible (unmanifest) only to others, not to themselves. The celestial realms, that are inhabited by these liberated souls who are comparable to Īśvara Himself, are constituted of "cinmaya" bodies and established in the Being of Brahman; these ethereal realms have been called in some of Purāṇas as "Goloka"; "Vaikuṇṭha", "Vrindāvan" and so on ; and in those Purāṇas these celestial abodes have also been characterized as everlasting and super-natural (aprākṛta). What this signifies is that, for reasons that have already been stated, though, during the period

of cosmic Dissolution to other jīvas they appear to be unmanifest, to the liberated souls dwelling in them they are perennial; hence, though natural (prākṛta) these (celestial realms) can be described as super-natural (aprākṛta).

The upshot of all this is that every "jīva" (individual soul) is a particular kind of Brahman's Contemplative Power (dr̥k-śakti). When this dr̥k-śakti flows outwards, only external physical entities including physical bodies become its objects ; and in that state, the jīva is called "baddha" (bound). In the state of "Prakṛti-līna" all physical objects like bodies become unmanifest ; no material objects like physical bodies which are capable of being perceived by this "dr̥k-śakti" then, exists ; consequently, every jīva-śakti then exists in his true self— "svarūpa" (that is, as pure dr̥k-śakti bereft of any object of perception or cognition). When a person who is mumukṣu (aspiring after liberation) receives appropriate sādhana (from the sadguru), this dr̥k-śakti, by being drawn away from external physical objects turns inwards; when at last, having renounced all particular physical objects (the dr̥k-śakti) becomes established in its true nature (Self) then the true nature of that ultimate Ground of even this "dr̥k-śakti" that has attained its "svarūpa" (true nature)—Parabrahman is revealed. He (the jīva) then becomes merged in Him (Parabrahman). This is his state of liberation (muktāvasthā). For, when, once this "dr̥k-śakti" (a particular jīva) attains Brahman-nature there can exist no cause for his lapsing from it. Then the Brahman-nature becomes perceptible to him everywhere. In reality, no particular dr̥k-śakti (jīva) is perishable, all are beginningless and everlasting. Even in the liberated state every dr̥k-śakti (jīva) remains, so does the jīva's subtle body; nevertheless, Parabrahman, who is the ultimate Substratum of both, having been experienced by the liberated puruṣa (jīva), he becomes wholly devoid of all sense of dualism (difference) and feels the presence of Brahman everywhere. The jīva combined with the subtle body assumes the gross for a

specified period of time; hence, even when liberated while alive the connection with the gross body (sthūla-deha) is not at once severed; for, in the state of liberation, no particular necessity is felt to put an end to it. The liberated puruṣas, being viewers of Brahman everywhere, do not feel any particular desire to cut short the duration of the sthūla-deha (gross-body). The association with the sthūla-deha being for every jīva temporary, it does not remain permanently manifest even in the case liberated souls. Hence, at the close of the pre-determined period it falls. The liberated soul who lingers in the gross body is called "jīvan-mukta" (liberated while alive) and, after the dissolution of the gross body they are called "videha-mukta" (liberated in the disembodied state). In the Fourth Chapter of Vedānta-Darśana, in discussing the matter, the states of jīvan-mukta and videha-mukta puruṣas have been specifically described and explained; a perusal of that discussion will enable the reader to acquire special knowledge in this matter.

Finally, I would like to submit, one should remember that it is only by the eternal omniscience of Brahman as Īśvara that the difference between Him and Jīva has been shown. But serious reflection on this matter will make one realize that this eternal omniscience of Īśvara is not wholly intelligible to baddha-jīva. Brahman as Īśvara is in reality, indescribable, He is beyond speech and mind; for, the power of speech and mind is limited. He is infinite. All that we can say is this entire cosmos extended over the three times (past, present and future) along with the jīvas is in its essential nature, no other than Brahman; and He also exists transcending it. But this transcendent nature of Īśvara is ineffable. Brahman as Īśvara cannot by any means be defined through reasoning and argument since, He is wholly intractable to the illustrations through which argument is established. It is only through the utterances of the Śruti that His existence can be known and, learning from the Sadguru the sādhana prescribed by the Śrutis and following it, this Brahman who is beyond the guṇas and the ultimate Ground of all guṇas (guṇāśraya) is

revealed. Knowing Him thus, the ācārya ṛṣis of ancient India have affirmed His existence through the śrutis. Now, by citing a little, in the next Quarter, from the utterances of the prime source, Śruti and the Smṛtis an attempt will be made to indicate the manner in which Brahmavidyā was taught first in India.

Here ends the third Quarter of the
second section entitled

Brahmavidyā.

OM TAT SAT

OM HARIḤ

SECOND SECTION

FOUR QUARTER EVIDENCE OF BRAHMAVIDYĀ

Now, through an examination of statements from the Śruti and the Smṛtis the nature of Brahman and the world will be briefly described.

1. Śruti

The Śruti says :

- (1) brahma vā idamagra āsīt. (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad)
- (2) ātmā vā idameka evāgra āsīt. nānyat kiñcana miṣat. saīkṣata lokān nusṛjā iti. sa imālokaṇasṛjata. (Aitareya Upaniṣad).
- (3) Sadeva somyedamagra āsīdekamevādvitīyam.

* * * *

tadaikṣata bahu syām prajāyeyeti..... (Chāndogya Upaniṣad)

In all these statements the word "idam " signifies the entire cosmos (comprising) the moving as well as immobile objects.

—This world was at the beginning one with Brahman. [(1) Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad]

— This visible world was in the beginning only Ātman ; nothing else existed ; later that Ātman contemplated thus , "should I create the worlds"? Then He created the worlds. [(2) Aitareya Upaniṣad].

— "O, gentle one (Śvetaketu)! In the beginning, (that is, before being manifested with names and forms) this world existed as only one, undifferentiated Being, that is

Brahman; that Sat (the one Being) thus contemplated (that is, reflected) : "Let Me become Many, let Me be manifested in a multiplicity of forms". [(3) Chāndogya Upaniṣad].

In these śrutis (Upaniṣadic utterances) four states of Brahman have been described ; before the appearance of the cosmos as a separate entity Brahman alone existed as the only Existent (sadvastu) ; not that the cosmos did not exist ; the world then existed as one (non-different) with Brahman ; nothing existed as a manifestation separate from Brahman; no vibration or action of any kind had manifested itself at that time ("nānyat kiñcana miṣat"). This is the first state. Having stated this the Śruti afterwards mentions the creative contemplative power manifested in this second state. The nature of this contemplative power (īkṣaṇa-śakti) Aiteraya Upaniṣad describes thus: this is only the predisposition towards Creation expressed in the words : "should I create?" Besides, "if He so wishes He can create"— this sense of power too is present in that state along with the contemplative power; this is the power of cosmic creation in its seed form. This (power) exists, at this second state as inherent in the contemplative power ("saīkṣata lokān nusrjā iti."). Then, proceeding to describe the third state of Brahman the Chāndogya Upaniṣad says that the determination to become Many first arises in Brahman. The Aitareya Upaniṣad states that at last, in the fourth state, He manifested the multiform cosmos. In the first state, the entire cosmos exists as wholly one with Brahman, as Brahman; in the second state the contemplative power (īkṣaṇa-śakti) arises and the seed of the manifestation of the cosmos as separate from Brahman exists combined with His "īkṣaṇa-śakti" in an unmanifest state; in the third state the determination to create (the cosmos) arises and, finally, in the fourth state the cosmos manifests itself clearly as a separate entity. The first state is the wholly inert (inactive) state of Brahman; the second state is that in which He is

characterized as the state in which there is the inclination towards cosmic Manifestation ; the third state is that in which there is the determination (to create) and the fourth state is that in which there is the creation of the cosmos as a separate entity. Brahman is complete in these four states. In the knowledge of the *jīva* all these (four) states appear in succession— one after another; nevertheless, all these states eternally belong to the nature of Brahman. It is difficult to conceive; hence, the Śruti reveals it as successive states to render it intelligible to (the mind of) the *jīva*. What has been stated at the beginning of the preceding Quarter and the Conclusion will be helpful in understanding these differences of state.

If one examines the above-mentioned first state of Brahman, it is seen that the utterances of the Śruti have directly revealed that this entire cosmos with its moving and immobile objects is Brahman; it is this Brahman alone who is denoted by the word *Sat* (the Existing). It is not that the world did not exist at all ; ("idam" that is this jagat) it existed as Brahman ("Brahma āsīt"— was Brahman) ; the Śruti affirms that in that first state Brahman was the only Existent; the world was one (non-different) with Him ; He remains compassing the entire cosmos within Himself. It is this first state that is specifically denoted as His essential nature. Regarding this essential nature of Brahman the Śruti says : "nānyat kiñcana miṣat" ; that is, in that state, nothing else appeared ; in that state there is no manifestation of any Śakti (Power), no function (of it). The creative *īkṣāṇa-śakti* (contemplative power) which, as the Śruti says, appeared later— even that has no function (activity) in this essential nature (*svarūpāvasthā*) of Brahman. How indeed can it be there? About this state, the Śruti says :

"yatra vā asya sarvamātmaivābhūt, tat kena kaṁ jighret, tat kena kaṁ paśyet, tat kena kaṁ śṛṇuyāt, tat kena kaṁ abhivadet, tat kena kaṁ manvīta, tat kena kaṁ vijānīyāt.

yenedam sarvaṁ vijānāti, tat kena vijānīyat vijñātāramare kena vijānīyāditi.”
(Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad)

— When, in relation to this Ātman, All was nothing but Ātman, (when, the entire cosmos had not been manifested as separate from the Ātman, when everything existed in the very nature of the Ātman) then who would smell whom, who would see whom, who would hear whom, whom would one speak to, whom would one think about, who would feel whom? He, through whom, all this is known, how would any one know Him ; He who is Himself the only Knower, who would know Him, the Paramātman by which mark or sign?

That in that state there is absolutely no manifestation of śakti (Power) by which one can indicate the Paramātman — to explain this clearly the śāstra has said :

“asīdidantamobhūtam.”

— all this visible cosmos was, at the beginning, only darkness (tamas), there was then in other words no manifestation of anything at all. All kinds of qualities (guṇas) and powers (śaktis) by which any object is manifested— all these were then unmanifest. In Chapter 347 of Śāntiparvan in the Mahābhārata, Vedavyāsa himself has explained the above statement thus :

“avyakte puruṣaṁ yāte puṁsi sarvagatēpi ca.

tama evābhavat sarvaṁ na prājñāyata kiñcana.

tamaso brahma sambhūtaṁ tamo mūlāmṛtātmakam.”

— “avyaktā” (unmanifest) Prakṛti, having merged in Puruṣa and the Puruṣa having merged in the all-embracing Parabrahman, all become enveloped in darkness; nothing was then manifest. From this Darkness (tamas) Hiraṇyagarbha Brahma appeared; this

"tamas" is the true nature of Him (Hiranyagarbha) who is one with the Supreme, Immortal Parabrahman. Hence, the real Being of Parabrahman cannot be expressed by any epithet. Nevertheless, he is "sat", that is, "He exists"—He is not "nothingness"; this is all that can be said of Him. Nothing exists except He; hence, He is Infinite, wholly nondual (pūrṇādvaita). He cannot be divided; All is He; who will divide whom and from whom and through what mark is division possible? Brahman alone is Substance (entity). The Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad says :

"atra hyete sarva ekam bhavanti"

— All epithets are unified in the Ātman; hence, the Ātman is undifferentiated (nirviśeṣa); He cannot, in other words be characterized by any distinguishing mark (līṅga). The Śruti therefore says again, specifically:

"aśabdamasparśamarūpamavyayam
tathā'rasannityamagandhavacca yat.
anādyanantaṁ mahataḥ param dhruvaṁ
nicāyā taṁ mṛtyumukhāt pramucyate." (Kāṭha Upaniṣad)

— He is devoid of sound, touch, form and free from decay; He is shorn of taste and smell; He is beginningless, endless, vaster than the vast and eternally constant; knowing Him to be thus the sādḥaka attains immortality.

Hence, the Paramātmā is unlike whatever is perceived or inferred ; hence the Śruti says :

"sa eṣa neti netyātmā'grhhyo".

(Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad 4th Chapter 2nd Brāhmaṇa)

— He is not like anything that is perceived or inferred; He can only be known as "not this", "not that" (neti, neti).

Nevertheless, the Śruti is also found to have said about Parabrahman:

"satyaṁ jñānamantaṁ brahma" (Taittirīya Upaniṣad)

— Brahman (in His essence) is Truth, Knowledge and infinite.

In the following statement from Taittirīya Upaniṣad the Paramātmā has also been described as pure Bliss (ānanda):

"bhṛguvai vāruṇiḥ. varuṇaṁ pitaramupasasāra. adhīhi bhagavo Brahmeti..... taṁ hovāca.

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante. yena jātāni jīvanti, yatprayantyaabhisamviśanti. tadvijijñāsasva. tad Brahmeti. sa tapo'tapyata. sa tapastaptvā..... ānando brahmeti vyajānāt. ānandādhyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jāyante. ānandena jātāni jīvanti. ānandaṁ prayantyaabhisamviśantīti."

— Bhṛgu was the son of Varuṇa; he went up to his father Varuṇa and said— O, Blessed Sir! teach me Brahman (what Brahman is like). Varuṇa said to him that from which all these (world of) objects and beings have been created ; by whom² all created beings (jīvas) are kept alive ; and into whom all beings return and finally merge, try to know Him in particular ; He is Brahman. Bhṛgu then sank into deep meditation and after meditation came to know that Brahman is, in His essential nature, all Bliss; it is from this Brahman who is in His essence pure Bliss, that all these beings have been born (created) ; it is by this Bliss that all these jīvas are kept alive and it is again into this blissful essence that they return and finally merge.

In these and other Śrutis Brahman has been described as, in His essential nature, Truth, Knowledge, Bliss and also as Infinite; it should not be understood however that it is the intention of the Śruti to specifically indicate through these statements the essential nature of Brahman; the essential nature of Brahman is really beyond knowledge that we acquire through words, it is only when one concentrates one's mind (buddhi) on the object

that these words point to, that the true nature of Brahman is revealed ; it is for this purpose that these words have been specially used. All that the Śruti here intends to convey is that Brahman is, in reality, beyond the world of jīvas and material objects. In Parabrahman there is absolutely no manifestation of difference or distinction of any kind; He can only be known through "neti", "neti" (not this, not this,.....) as different from all perceived or imagined entities. Parabrahman is not unconscious (jāḍa) like all visible dead matter (unconscious physical objects)— it is only in this sense that He is, in His true nature pure "Knowledge" ; He is not, like jīvas and material objects, lacking in all pervasiveness, limited and possessed of visible forms — it is in this sense that He is "infinite"; He is not, like jīvas, afflicted by beginningless desire and sense of want as well as ignorance — it is in this sense that He is all-Bliss. The word knowledge becomes intelligible only in relation to an object of knowledge; or, it only signifies a particular mental phenomena (citta-vṛtti) called "knowledge"; Parabrahman however, is immanent in all (objects and beings) and all-en-compassing ; hence, in relation to Him there is no separate "knowable" (jñeya) object, He Himself is His own object of knowledge. Parabrahman is moreover, not the mental phenomenon that we call "knowledge"; to characterize Him as such is not the purpose of this Śruti. Similarly, "ānanda" (bliss) too is intelligible in relation to some object of enjoyment; it also means uninterrupted movement of all mental processes.⁴⁶ Parabrahman, however is an entity that is one, without a second (advitīya). And He is not a certain state of mental process nor is He a mere object of enjoyment. It can never be the intention of the Śruti to describe Him as such ; for, the Śruti

⁴⁶ In the state of deep "samprajñāta samādhi", there is no knowledge of any external object; knowledge, then, is knowledge of itself. In that state of mind (citta), the stream of pure knowledge goes on in a continuous flow. At that time, ānanda, which is objectless and ineffable is experienced. The nature of this samprajñāta samādhi has later been dealt with specifically in the Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali.

affirms the dissolution of all these (in Brahman). Through these statements therefore, His true nature cannot really be comprehended.

Thus again, the statement of the Śruti to the effect that Brahman is an entity which exists (Sadvastu) or as Truth — this too is not intended to indicate His essential nature. The term "sat" usually signifies "something that subsists or exists". But whenever we refer to an existent entity we conceive an object which is limited and has a visible form. But Parabrahman is illimitable and boundless, hence devoid of form. The statement of the Śruti to the effect that He is 'sat' means that He is not like all created jīvas and objects, subject to change ; He is immobile, immutable (dhruva—constant). He is "Sat" ; the cosmos is "jagat" (fleeting, changeable). The word jagat has been derived by adding the suffix "kvip" to the verbal root "gam" (to go); it means movement, liable to change. The world however is constantly changing. It is in this sense that the Śruti, the Smṛti, Itihāsa and Purāṇa and other śāstras have characterized this world as "asat" (non-existent). But Parabrahman is unchangeable, and really exists as perennially one and immovable. It is in this sense that the Śruti has described Him as "sat". Keeping in view this absolute non-dualism (advaitattva) of Parabrahman He has been characterized as "nirguṇa" (devoid of all attributes) ; for, in that essential nature of Brahman, there is no differentiation between the guṇas and the guṇin (possessor of guṇas); the world (jagat) exists as one, indissolubly fused with this immutable Being of Brahman.

Nevertheless, though the nature of Parabrahman is like this on one side, the earlier-quoted śrutis (Upaniṣadic utterance) from the Taittirīya Upaniṣad and the other Upaniṣads have affirmed about Him that (yato vā imani bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayantya abhisamviśanti) — the entire cosmos issues from Him, is kept alive (sustain)

through Him and finally merges in Him. The Śruti therefore has clearly pronounced that the power to create, sustain and dissolve the cosmos also exists in Parabrahman. At the beginning of this Quarter the pre-disposition to cosmic manifestation of this power has been called the second state of Parabrahman. As this power is the primal cause of cosmic creation, it is the power that is inherent in the very nature of Parabrahman; by virtue of this power He manifests the cosmos and after manifesting it, sustains and controls it and finally, also brings about its dissolution. This power of Parabrahman is called "aiśīśakti" (divine power) and being endowed with this aiśīśakti Parabrahman is designated "Īśvara" and "Parameśvara". From this aiśīśakti which is inherent in Parabrahman, the cosmos is manifested ; it is being supported by this śakti that the cosmos subsists and it is in this śakti again that the cosmos dissolves ; there is no other constituent element of the cosmos. Having issued from this śakti, this cosmos is the result of that power or, in other words, the transformation of it; hence, the world is essentially constituted of guṇas (the terms "śakti" and "guṇa" are here, synonymous). Parameśvara is the ultimate substratum of this Universe constituted of guṇas; the universe is guṇa, He is the "guṇin"; the universe (viśva) is śakti, He is the "śaktimān" (possessor of power). Śakti cannot exist without a support or source (āśraya) ; guṇa, whenever mentioned, always implies somebody endowed with guṇa and śakti always implies the śakti of somebody ; Parabrahman is that "Guṇin" and that Possessor of Power (śaktimān),— the Eternal Existent (sadvastu) ; the cosmos constitutes His guṇa or śakti. From this however, it should not be understood that the divine power (aiśīśakti) of Parabrahman is exhausted by His cosmic manifestation; having manifested the cosmos, He, by virtue of that inherent power sustains and controls it and at the time of Dissolution withdraws it and merges it into Himself. Hence, the cosmos is an outcome of only a part of this "aiśīśakti". The Blessed Lord therefore, says in the Bhagavadgītā— "viṣṭabhyāhamidaṁ kṛtsnaṁ ekāṁśenasthito jagat" (I remain,

sustaining the entire cosmos with only a part of Myself). Guṇa or śakti cannot exist as an entity separate and distinct from the guṇin or the śaktimāna; hence, the jagat (the world) too cannot exist as separate and distinct from its Substratum (Ground), Brahman. Nevertheless, the being of the guṇin is not exhausted by his guṇa ; the essential nature of the guṇin remains transcending the guṇa. Parabrahman too therefore, exists even transcending His guṇas. It is this precisely which has been clearly stated in the Bhagavadgītā as follows :

mayā tatamidaṁ sarvaṁ jagadavyaktamūrtinā
matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣvavasthitaḥ (9.4)

— I remain pervading this entire cosmos in my unmanifest (avyakta) Being; all beings, moving and immobile, exist in Me; but I do not exist in them (I remain transcending all these being).

Parabrahman, understood, thus, as, on the one hand, beyond the guṇas (guṇātīta) or nirguṇa and on the other, as pure Consciousness (caitanya) who is Omniscient and the Ground of all existence — all statements of the Śruti are harmonized and reconciled and this is the purpose of all the śrutis. Śruti, by calling Him “Īśvara” or “Parameśvara” has revealed this as His essential Being. Beyond and apart from Him, there exists no second object ; this is why He is “parama advaita” (supremely non-dual) ; He is all-pervading ; hence His name— “Viṣṇu”; He is the great charmer of all hearts and persists through eternity, hence His name “Kṛṣṇa” ; all guṇas and śakti dissolve in Him— in this sense He is (called) Rudra ; He is vaster than the vast— in this sense He is (called) “Brahman”. He is “full” and “self-complete” (pūrṇa) and so, does not depend on anything else— in this sense He is (called) “Puruṣa” or “Parama-Puruṣa” or “Uttama-Puruṣa”. Hence, in describing the

nature of Parabrahman, He has to be described, on the hand, as "nirguna", beyond the reach of speech and mind and, on the other, as omnipotent and "saguna" ; hence, He is complete as both nirguna (devoid of all attributes) and saguna (endowed with attributes).

That there exists, as the Ground of this world that is constituted of guṇas, some indefinable Entity which is "sat"— is something which every jīva believes (within himself) ; this will be illustrated by an example:

"I am seeing a tree"— if we examine this sentence we find that my visual sense-organ, (my eyes) has received a particular form; that particular form is the tree is not what I directly conceive. There is a distinct and separate entity, the tree; with that as its substratum, this form exists as its "guṇa". This form can change and is in fact changing all the time ; for instance : its colour may change and is changing all the time ; its other qualities (guṇas) may change and, as a matter of fact, changing all the time ; nevertheless, the entity known as the "tree" which is the substratum of all these sensible qualities like "form" (rūpa), remain unchanged — this is the natural and inevitable conviction of my own as also that of others, with the change in the form, the name of the object too can change ; for instance, a certain substance that is called clay (mṛttikā) now ; at the next moment this very substance may be named "an earthen plate" ('sarāva') or an earthen-jar (ghaṭa) or a pitcher and so on ; and yet, at the back of all these various names, there exists as distinct from all these changing forms as their substratum, a certain entity which remains always the same— this is the natural and inevitable conviction of all men. But this unchanging substratum which is the source and ultimate support of all these sensible qualities like "form"— the true nature of that nobody is able to ascertain; nevertheless, that such an entity actually exists, this, and this alone is the natural conviction of all. The Śruti declares that all things have Brahman as their ultimate Ground,

and essentially one with Him, being only His "śakti" or "guṇa"; whatever in other words, can be perceived or inferred is a quality or attribute (guṇa) of a certain Entity. That Entity which possesses these guṇas as the "guṇin" is an unchangeable Being (sadvastu). Being beyond all guṇas and the actions of guṇas, He cannot be indicated by means of any object of this world which is essentially constituted of guṇas; His true nature cannot be expressed by any external sign or mark for, there is nothing (in the world) that is in any way analogous to that "svarūpa" (true nature). That ultimate Substratum (Ground) is Brahman. Our natural conviction regarding the existence of this underlying Substratum is not a delusion. Nevertheless, the true nature of this Substratum cannot be known through imagination of any kind; it was only by following the sādhanā indicated by the Śruti that the Ārya ṛṣis of India alone in this world of mortals, came to know Him. When once, the knowledge of the true nature of the Supreme Reality, Parabrahman or Paramātmān, the ultimate Ground Parameśvara (the supreme Divine) arises the jīva, being totally freed from the bonds of ignorance, becomes liberated from the afflictions and sufferings caused by ignorance and attains supreme bliss. If one comes to know Parabrahman as the eternal and ultimate source of All, it becomes easily understandable that He is beyond sound, touch, all visible forms, taste, Immutable and free from birth, death and decay—and nirguṇa. Hence, he who has become established in that ultimate Ground of all Existence, Paramātmān is truly established in his real Self (svārūpa) and getting beyond all states determined by the guṇas like birth, decay and death has attained the supreme status (abode) of the all-pervading, all-sustaining Viṣṇu. In the śruti quoted earlier which begins with "aśabdamasparśam....." and other śrutis it is this Truth that has been revealed. On the other hand, the guṇas belong to Brahman alone and manifest themselves only through Him; Brahman therefore is also "saguṇa". Hence, both

"saguṇatva" (being endowed with attribute) and "nirguṇatva" (being devoid of attributes) are predicable for Brahman.

The dualism that is inherent in the nature of Parabrahman has been mentioned. Now, by a detailed analysis of the śrutis that have been quoted at the beginning of this Quarter, this above-mentioned dual-status of Brahman will be made even clearer.

The earlier quoted statement of Aitereya Upaniṣad "Ātmā vā idameka evāgra āsīt. nānyat kiñcana miṣat." (thus visible world was in the beginning only Ātman ; nothing else existed). After saying this it (the śruti) says later : (saīkṣata lokān nusṛjā . iti. sa imālokaṇasṛjata.). "Shall I create the worlds? With this intention He contemplated ; then He created the worlds. The intention of the first part of the last sentence will now be examined. The Śruti says, "shall I create the worlds?"— with this purpose in view the Paramātmā "contemplated" ; He was, asleep as it were, and then, waking up, He looked around. This is His second state. In the first state even this act of contemplation (īkṣaṇa) had been absent, this has been stated by the śruti at the very outset : "Ātmā vā idameka evāgra āsīt. nānyat kiñcana miṣat." This is the completely non-dual state of Brahman's essential nature which is devoid of all distinction between the guṇas and the "guṇin" (which has been explained before). The power by virtue of which the visual act is accomplished is called "dr̥k-śakti". Nevertheless, the visual act cannot take place in the absence of something visible (some to be known— as an object of "dr̥k-śakti". But in the second state mentioned before nothing that is visible (perceptible) had appeared as yet; for, the Śruti says "shall I create the worlds"— with this object the Paramātmā contemplated. From this it is known that the visible worlds had not then appeared at all ; nevertheless, the power to manifest them is present in Brahman. Hence, the purport of the

Śruti is clearly that in the second state, Brahman exists only as the Being endowed with the power of contemplation (dṛk-śakti); the visible cosmos is present in Him as unmanifest, latent power. He is able to make use of this unmanifest Power, contemplated as an object, as the material cause of the cosmos for the purpose of Creation ; nevertheless, in this state His determination to create the cosmos has not yet appeared. And yet, the contemplative power endowed with which He appears in that state, is a power of a kind by virtue of which the worlds can appear as separate from one another (the sentence from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad has expressed it even more clearly in— "tadaikṣata bahusyām"). If along with this Śruti (Upaniṣadic utterance) one considers the statement from the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (which has been explained before) : "yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante. yena jātāni jīvanti, yatprayantyaabhisamviśanti" as well as similar utterances from other Upaniṣads, and examines the intention of the Śruti, one arrives at the conclusion that the creation of the cosmos and its sustenance as well as maintenance and final dissolution—all these three powers exist in the Being of Brahman. This is what constitutes His "saguṇatva"— His omnipotence. The awakening of this creative power, that is, its being inclined to act— this is the second state. It can, speaking generally, be called the "Īśvara" state. For, in this the omnipotence of Parabrahman first appears; the Sustenance and Dissolution of the Cosmos too originates from this state. The "nirguṇa" state, which is affirmed by the śāstras in particular as His essential nature (svarūpa), is not comprehensible by the mind. For, it is utterly unlike all visible objects; this has been pointed out before. However, this second "saguṇa" state characterized by the "awakening" (of the creative contemplation) is not, utterly un-intelligible to the intellect. In this state nothing visible, it is true, has appeared as yet ; but it exists in the Being of Brahman being connected with the manifested "dṛk-śakti" (īkṣaṇa-śakti — contemplative power) that it may be manifested as soon as the determination to create appears in Brahman. In reality,

the unmanifest "dr̥k-śakti" exists at that time as indistinguishable from the manifested dr̥k-śakti. If one ponders this matter a little closely it will seem to be not altogether inconceivable (by the intellect). I have within me, for instance the power called anger; when the occasion comes it is roused; when it remains latent however, it cannot be said that it does not exist; it must be said therefore that it remains at that in an unmanifest state, united with me ; when something provocative occurs, it is aroused. In a similar manner, "dr̥śya-śakti" (the faculty existing as an object of contemplation) which is the material cause of the cosmos, remains, before creation, unmanifest (latent) as fused with the dr̥k-śakti of Brahman. It is this power that remains in the state of dr̥k (contemplator) and dr̥śya (contemplated) fused together is the seed of cosmic manifestation. The unmanifest "dr̥śya-śakti" is called "Prakṛti". At this state this power residing in the state of union of "dr̥k" and "dr̥śya" is like the external Form, so to speak, of Parabrahman. The "dr̥śya" part of It, evolving, manifests itself as the cosmos while the dr̥k-śakti inhering in every part of it is known by the name of "jīva". But it is necessary to understand thoroughly the difference between this manifested state of Brahman which is endowed with śakti and His essential Being which is devoid of all the guṇas. Brahman contemplates, as part of His essential Being, Creation, Continuation and Dissolution as well as everything including the past, the present and the future simultaneously (in an eternal presence); this has been thoroughly discussed in the concluding section of the preceding Quarter. The power of Time being absent in Him in His essential nature and there being absolutely no distinction between knowledge knowable object and the knower, even the epithet "omniscient" (sarvajña) is not wholly applicable to Him. The one pure, wholly non-dual Brahman subsists as devoid of all activities and movements— this is all that can be said about Him in that state; it follows therefore that in that true Essence (of Brahman) nothing that can be called "guṇa" or "śakti" is manifest. In that earlier-mentioned second-state, on the other

hand, Brahman is predisposed (unmukha) towards Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution. In the state of Dissolution, Brahman, after merging the entire visible cosmos in Himself, remains only as pure "dr̥k-śakti". Nevertheless, at that time, dr̥śya-śakti, merged in Him, remains disposed towards fresh manifestation ; this pre-disposition only is expressed by the statement of the Śruti : "sa īkṣata lokān nu sṛjā" (shall I create the worlds?). However, both the seminal (seed) state and the manifested state of the world are eternally established in the Being of Parabrahman in whom the knowledge of the three times—past, present and future—exists ; hence, this state of omniscience and the state characterized by "dr̥k-śakti" are different. In this latter state, Parabrahman, as if forgetting His fully omniscient Essence which is shorn of all distinctions, and becoming fully endowed with power and as if issuing from His Essence the cosmos, becomes disposed to bring about its Creation, Continuation and Dissolution. Nevertheless, even in that state His sense of dualism has not yet been manifested ; even in that state He remains One and wholly Non-dual (advaita) ; since, there is no other material cause (constituent) of the created cosmos except He Himself and the cosmos too had not yet appeared then as a separate entity. He (in that state) knows Himself as infinitely Powerful and wholly non-dual Brahman. The Br̥hadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, referring to that state, says :

"tadātmānamevāvedahaṁ Brahmāsmīti, tasmāt tat sarvamabhavat" [He knew Himself as Brahman and nothing else, (there is no other Being who can thwart His power) that is why He could become All] and so on. Hence, He who is endowed with such Power, becomes through this power, to some extent capable of being conceived by the higher Mind (buddhi). This is the reason why referring to this state which is endowed with guṇas Brahman can be characterized as "viśeṣa". (distinguished, a distinctive individual or entity). The nirguṇa Essence of Brahman – the Absolute – cannot be expressed by the possession of a special power or any other distinctive mark. This therefore, is his

nirviśeṣa (without distinguishing characteristic of any kind) a "nirguṇa" (devoid of attributes) state. This is what is known as the absolute non-dualism (ekāntādvaitattva) of Brahman. , on the other hand, being endowed with special powers like the power of cosmic creation, the second state can be characterized as "non-dualism with distinction" (viśiṣṭādvaitattva).

This dual status (nirguṇattva and saguṇattva) of Brahman has been revealed in all kinds of śrutis. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad for instance, says, on the one hand—

"sa eṣa neti netyātmā'grhhyah".

This Brahman is known only as "neti", "neti" (not this, not this.....) that is as beyond the guṇas (only as an Entity that is separate and distinct or unknown entity). He is separate from all the objects that are known or yet unknown. He cannot be indicated by any perceived or imagined attribute. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad says again :

"etat sarvaṁ brahma,"

Also, in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad :

"sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahma".

Both the śrutis declare : "All this—the entire cosmos—is indeed Brahman."

The reason why the śruti says that this entire cosmos, everything that exists, is Brahman has been clearly explained at the beginning of this Quarter by quotations from the Chāndogya and other Upaniṣads. That Śruti (the Chāndogya Upaniṣad) says : "tadaikṣata bahu syāṁ prajāyeyeti" (He contemplated this : I shall become many, let Me multiply Myself in creation). Having contemplated thus : "sa imāṁlonkānasrjata"— He created all these worlds. It follows therefore that this entire manifested cosmos has not been created with any other constituent elements (as its material cause) ; it is Brahman Himself who, wishing to manifest Himself as Many, appeared as the entire cosmos (with all moving and immobile objects). This is what is known as Creation. Hence, the

affirmation of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad — “sarvaṁ khalvidam brahma” (All this is Brahman)—is truly the message of all śrutis (Upaniṣadic utterances).

As the Śruti says that Brahman manifests Himself through Self-Creation as many, is brought about by the transformation of the “dṛśya” and “dṛk” śaktis. It is through the transformation of “dṛśya” śakti from which springs this material cosmos; the “dṛk-śakti” which inhere in all its various separate parts that are called jīvas ; hence, entering all parts of the visible cosmos, this jīva-śakti enjoys it in various ways ; hence, both the jīva and the jagat are portions or fragments (amśa) of Īśvara. Parabrahman is also and at the same time endowed with aiśī -śakti (divine power), that is to say Īśvara ; on the other hand, He is also utterly beyond all guṇas (guṇātīta), totally devoid of all differences and distinctions, thoroughly inert (immobile) and immutable (nirvikāra) ; and both jīva and jagat are His forms (manifestations). This is the essence of all Vedantic (Upaniṣadic) statements (śrutis).

The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad has stated this matter very clearly. So I quote several verses from it below :

om brahmavādinō vadanti
kiṁ kāraṇaṁ brahma kutaḥ sma jātāḥ .

* * * * *
te dhyānayogānugatā apaśyan
devātmaśaktiṁ svaguṇairnigūḍhām.

* * * * *
sarvājīve sarvasamsthe bṛhante
asmin haṁso bhrāmyate brahmacakre.
prthagātmānaṁ preritāraṇca matvā
juṣṭatatastenāmṛtatvameti.

udgītametat paramantu Brahma
tasmim strayaṁ supraṭiṣṭhākṣārañca.

* * *
jñājñau dvāvajāvīśānīśā-
vajā hyekā bhokṛbhogyārthayuktā.
anantaścātma viśvarūpo hyakartā.
trayaṁ yadā vindate brahmametata.

— learned sages devoted to the study of the nature of Brahman discoursed thus among themselves : Is Brahman the cause of cosmic creation? Whence have we been brought into being? Plunging into meditation (dhyāna) they came to know that the power that is inherent in the very Being of Paramātman— Parabrahman, is the Primal Cause of this entire manifested cosmos ; and it is the power that lies at the back of the cosmos which It has produced (as its effect). In whom all beings live, in whom all beings merge at the end, who is all-pervading— it is in that Brahman that the jīva (haṁsa) is being eternally turned round and round like an object fixed on a wheel. It is because the jīva feels himself separate from the creator of the Universe, Īśvara that he is thus turned around ; later, it is only when he feels himself one with Īśvara through meditation, the jīva becomes eternally free from the cycle of birth and death, and thus attains immortality. It is this Brahman who constitutes the principal theme of all Śrutis ; He is free from all attributes that characterize the phenomenal world, the Essence of all ; in Him, Īśvara, jīva and jagat— all these three are fully established. Nevertheless, even though He is the ultimate Substratum (source) of all these three (aspects), He is “Akṣara” (that is unchangeable or immutable). (of these) Īśvara is endowed with the attribute of Omniscience, while the jīva is ignorant (ajñā); both however are birthless and beginningless ; Īśvara is all-powerful, while jīva is not so. Prakṛti, which constitutes the world contemplated (dṛśya), that too is without genesis

(birth), beginningless, remaining as the eternal śakti of Brahman, exists for the enjoyment of the Puruṣa. The Paramātmā is beyond all limitations of space and time — infinite ; the entire cosmos is His Form ; hence, He is non-doer (akartā). Īśvara, jīva and Prakṛti all these three forms are His ; knowing this, the jīva becomes liberated.

Śrīmat Śaṅkarācārya, in his commentary has interpreted the earlier-quoted verse, “devātmaśaktim svaguṇairnigūḍhām” as follows :

“devasya dyotanādi yuktasya māyino maheśvarasya paramātmāna ātmabhūtā masvatantrām na..... pṛthagbhūtām svatantrām śaktim kāraṇamapaśyan..... athavā devātmaśaktimiti devaśca ātmā ca śaktiśca yasya parasya brahmaṇovasthābhedaśtām prakṛtipuruṣeśvarāṇām svarūpabhūtām.....parātparatarām śaktim kāraṇamapaśyanniti.”

— they (Brahma-vādins) knew as the primal cause of the cosmos that Power (śakti) which is one with, (that is, not different from) the Deva (the Self-effulgent), the Lord of Māyā, the supreme Īśvara or Paramātmā. Or, on a different interpretation : they (the Brahma-vādins) knew the supreme power of the Parabrahman whose diverse states are constituted by Deva, Ātmā and śakti, or, in other words, Īśvara, Puruṣa(jīva) and Prakṛti.

Hence, in this interpretation of the Śruti Śaṅkarācārya himself has admitted that though Parabrahman is, in His Essence “nirguṇa”, the guṇas are one with Him, not separate ; It follows therefore that He has association with guṇas ; this is the purport of the Śruti. Besides, in the earlier-quoted śruti, “tasmim strayaṁ supraṭiṣṭhākṣāraṇca” as well as in the last-quoted Śruti which begins with “jñājñau.....”, it has been clearly stated that the jīva and the cosmos as Prakṛti and Īśvara— are essentially Brahman ; hence, just as He is “saguṇa” on the one hand, so is He on the other hand, eternally nirguṇa, “akartā” (non-doer - without activity of any kind) and “akṣara” (immutable).

Nevertheless, Brahman is, at the same time, without distinctive characteristics and distinct, shorn of power, devoid of qualities (nirguṇa) and yet all powerful and endowed with attribute (saguṇa) ; simultaneously advaita(non-dual) and dvaita(dual); Apparently, it is difficult for the mind to conceive this. In the Sāṃkhya Darśana and Pātañjala Darśana, this dual status has been explained thus : "Prakṛti" as "dṛśya", exists in Parabrahman like a shadow ; this is why Brahman appears to be possessed of guṇas ; yet, He is in reality, beyond the guṇas. Just as pure crystal has no colour ; and yet, if the shadow (reflection) of the red "javā" flower (hibiscus) falls on the crystal it looks red ; nevertheless, though it appears to be so the crystal remains really transparent as before ; in a similar manner, Prakṛti, constituted of guṇa, having fallen on transparent, clear, guṇatīta Brahman and thus, Brahman appears to be endowed with attributes. Again, these philosophers have said that the guṇa -constituted Prakṛti is like a piece of iron while the Ātman (Puruṣa) is like fire. Just as the piece of iron coming in contact with fire acquires the power to burn, so, Prakṛti too, remaining in constant proximity of the Ātman, acquires apparently, like a hot piece of iron, the all-pervasiveness of the Ātman-nature and creates the universe. They (the ṛṣis) have also compared Prakṛti with a piece of iron and the Ātman with a magnet. Just as a piece of iron, when brought in contact with a magnet, apparently assumes magnetic characteristics and yet the magnet remains just as it was before with its identity wholly unaffected; so, the guṇa-constituted Prakṛti having remained constantly associated (with Brahman) attains the power to create the cosmos; Brahman, however, remains eternally Self-established and unaffected. The reflection of the Ātman in Prakṛti is called Puruṣa or "Puruṣāṃśa" (a part of the Puruṣa) by philosophers of the Sāṃkhya school. Prakṛti remains eternally combined with this "reflection" (ābhāsa) of the Puruṣa ; hence she comprises both (Herself and the reflection of the Puruṣa) and both "bandha" (bandage) and "mokṣa" (liberation) truly belong to prakṛiti, not Ātman ; the Ātman is

eternally free in nature. The Sāṃkhya philosophers have thus tried to express this dual nature of Brahman by this example ; they have not pronounced that the world is illusory (mithyā—false) ; all that they affirm is that it is mutable— subject to change.

If one is to explain this dual status (dvirūpattva) of Brahman, one has to say something like this and that these examples are excellent is indubitable. Nevertheless, to express this dual nature of Brahman is in reality, impossible; for, it is only through objects that are perceptible to us that examples are made. But it has been said earlier that the entire cosmos is essentially constituted of guṇa and as such beyond them ; there is nothing comparable to It in this world of phenomena. It is only guṇas that are perceptible to us. Some kind of sound, some kind of tactual sensation (softness, hardness, smoothness and so on), some kind of form, some sort of taste (rasa), some sort of smell— these are nothing but “guṇas” (qualities). It is impossible, therefore, fully to generate a clear conception of an entity that is beyond the guṇa through examples that are essentially constituted of perceptible guṇas. Both the crystal and the hibiscus (javā) are objects with visible forms constituted of the five cosmic elements and are similar in many other ways ; in like manner, fire and iron and a magnet and an iron bar are similar to each other, analogous in many ways ; hence, they are capable of mutual interpenetration (through their respective guṇas) ; but these examples are not wholly applicable to such unique and unparalleled guṇas and Brahman who transcends the guṇas.

Those who hold atheistic views have resolved this contradiction by an outright denial of the existence of Brahman. By accepting the teachings of the Sāṃkhya philosophy in parts and by interpreting the latter in a manner that is favourable to their own views, they have mentioned the visible and inanimate physical Nature (Prakṛti) as the soul cause of the genesis of the cosmos. After the demise of Śākyasimha (The Buddha), when through the

inexorable influence of Time his views were distorted, some Buddhist scholars by following the Sāṃkhya Philosophy interpreted in a wrong way, started disseminating atheistic views. Śrīmat Śaṃkarācārya successfully refuted their views by displaying a stupendous intellectual power. On the other hand, he also, by wholly denying the very existence of this world which comprises material objects as well as jīvas, has tried to resolve this contradiction. By virtue of his extra-ordinary intellectual power and by using elaborate arguments in a masterly manner has indeed devastatingly refuted atheistic Buddhist views ; but the method he had adopted in initiating his disputating, makes it impossible to harmonize and reconcile the nirguṇattva and saguṇattva of Brahman ; hence, ācārya Śaṃkara has finally established the view that the phenomenal world is illusory and false ; its reality is only empirical and rooted in ignorance. Just as in a dark room one mistakes a rope for a snake, and yet when the darkness is dispelled the error is dissipated and the appearance of the snake is known to be false, so it is only owing to ignorance that the world is experienced to be real ; at the rise of Knowledge, it is realized as false.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, though this example has been cited in the śāstras in relation to the world, by this, the total illusoryness of the world has not been demonstrated. Just as in a dark place a rope when seen by one is mistaken for a snake, and yet, when darkness is dispelled, the seen object being perceived as a rope, the illusion of a snake disappears; it is then realized as a rope, the illusion of a snake disappears; it is then realized that it is the rope which is the real object and that thinking it to be a snake was only an illusion (error) ;

⁴⁷ The followers of Śaṃkara make out this to be the view of Śaṃkarācārya himself ; in their view, the world is wholly illusory ; in the "Śārīraka bhāṣya" (commentary on the Brahma-sūtra) of Śaṃkarācārya and in his other works like "Vivekacūḍāmaṇi", at many places, it is this view that has been expressed. It is not necessary however to decide whether this is the view that was really held by Śaṃkarācārya; accepting what passes for his own view as that really held by him I shall discuss it in this book.

it is generally owing to ignorance that the jīva experiences the world as existing as separate entities, self-subsistent; with the rise of Brahman-knowledge that error is dissipated ; the world then appears as one with, and established in, Brahman. This is the purport of the above-mentioned metaphor. It is not the intention of this metaphor to demonstrate the total illusoryness of the world ; what it really signifies is the affirmation of the Brahman-nature of the phenomenal world. The followers of the views of Śaṅkarācārya, describe the visible world as wholly false, as only Māyā (Illusion). The question at this point however is : "What is this Māyā? What is its true nature? In whom, does this Māyā subsist?" If the "Māyā" has an existence separate and distinct from Brahman, the non-dual (advaita) character of Brahman which the Śruti has everywhere affirmed, becomes untenable (invalid) ; for, a second Entity, other than Brahman comes in the way of His non-dualism. If Māyā is one with Brahman, if, in other words, She is only His Śakti Brahman becomes endowed with Śakti (guṇa)— He becomes "sa-śaktika" (sa guṇa) ; His absolute nirguṇattva (attributelessness) ceases, and the manner in which Śaṅkara Swami argued depending on various śrutis, in support of his view that Brahman is essentially and absolutely attributeless (nirguṇa),— all this becomes thoroughly untenable. If "Māyā" happens to be a totally false entity then, in that case, what is itself false (illusory) cannot produce any effect of any kind. Consequently, Śaṅkarācārya says regarding the nature of this "Māyā" that neither Her oneness with Brahman nor difference from Him, neither Her existence nor her non-existence can be ascertained ; she is "tattvānyatvābhyāma-nirvacanīyā" (that is, She is thus indescribable) [see Śaṅkara's commentary or Vedānta-Darśana (1.5)] Nothing special can be noted in such a conclusion. It is admitted that "Māyā" existed even before Creation and, consequently, is eternal. Śaṅkarācārya says that this Māyā can be characterized neither as one with Brahman nor as separate from Him. Now, no matter what sort of entity it is, it will either be

one with Brahman or as separate from Him. That something is neither Brahman nor different from Brahman, how can the human intellect conceive it at all? Śaṁkarācārya has objected to the dual status mentioned by the “Śruti” as incomprehensible to the mind ; nevertheless, this indescribability of the “Māyā” affirmed by him is equally unintelligible (to the human intellect). Hence, by this conclusion of Śaṁkarācārya the contradiction is in no way resolved. On the other hand, the dual status of Brahman is confirmed by innumerable Śrutis (upaniṣadic utterances). This view of Śaṁkara Swami is contrary to the views of all other commentators (on vedānta) and there is no evidence from the Śruti in support of this. Nevertheless, there are scholars who uphold this view of Śaṁkarācārya and make all that “the world is an illusion” is the conclusion of vedānta ; if one follows this view of theirs, there occurs a particular flaw, namely, that all moral laws (dharma) and prescribed codes of conduct in this world vanish and the innumerable Śrutis that urge these become meaningless. For, if all this “saṁsāra” is false, then dharma, karma, upāsanā (worship), bhakti, jñāna— all turn out to be illusory; who will adore whom, who will meditate on whom? Who in that case will be bound, and who released (from bondage)? All this is false ; and as for the only Existent, Paramātmā— He is all the time eternal, devoid of attributes (nirguṇa) and free! In answer to this, it is said, when, as long as there is Ignorance, one does not realize that the reality of Brahman and the illusoryness of saṁsāra (the phenomenal world), it is necessary to resort to “sādhana” (spiritual effort) in order to dispel it (ignorance). But then, whose ignorance is this? Learned men who follow the doctrine of Śaṁkarācārya have affirmed the Vedantic utterance “tattvamasi” (That art thou) as the greatest among the “mahā-vākyas” (the highest and most exalted statements of the Śruti). In their view, Brahman and the jīva are one and identical. There is absolutely no difference of any kind between them ; the jīva in his essential nature is Brahman in His fullness and totality (pūrṇa Brahman). But there is indeed no possibility of (the existence of) Ignorance

in Brahman; how then can the jīva have ignorance? Therefore, when ignorance is impossible, how does the question of resorting to sādhanā to dissipate it, arise at all, and what significance can be there in speaking about "dispelling" it? After considering these and other flaws in the view of Śaṅkarācārya, the "ācāryas" (spiritual masters) following the path of bhakti (devotion) have not accepted it and immediately after the dissemination of Śaṅkara's commentary (on Vedānta) protests began to be voiced in India. Śrī Rāmānuja Swami, who was the first to set in motion the stream of protest, composed the commentary on Vedānta-Darśana that became famous as "Śrī-Bhāṣya"; citing innumerable corroborating statements from Śruti, Smṛti, Tantra and Purāṇa and so on, he has established the "saguṇattva" of Brahman. To avoid excessive elaboration, these are not specifically cited here. As a matter of fact, the empirical reality of the world is accepted even in Śaṅkara's view ; nevertheless, according to that view it is an hallucination. If "hallucination" is understood to mean partial or incomplete vision, there is no contradiction. That such (erroneous) visions occur, is acknowledged by all ; nevertheless, when there is no other existent (entity) except Brahman then, such vision can belong to Brahman alone. It must therefore be admitted that the capacity for vision of this kind exists in Brahman. The moment this is admitted the existence of jīva-śakti is accepted ; for, the power by virtue of which Brahman becomes a partial or incomplete viewer (asamyag-darśin) is called jīva-śakti and the power that is turned into the object of this jīva-śaktis' vision is called "jagat". The "jagat" and the "jīva" both are special powers of Brahman ; transcending them both, is Brahman as omniscient who is called Īśvara ; This is what has been revealed and explained in śrutis like the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad and Smṛtis like Śrīmad-Bhagavadgītā.

Thus, Śaṅkara's (Vedantic) view being contrary to the natural conviction of all jīvas and the śāstras, it has not been accepted in this book. Keeping in view, on the one hand, there

are the śrutis which affirm the Brahman as the very self of All (sarvātmaka) and devoid of all attributes and all distinctive characteristics (nirviśeṣa) on the other, it is the dual status of Brahman that has been set forth in this book and it is this interpretation that has transmitted to us through a long and continuous line of "ācārya" ṛṣis. Moreover, in this interpretation the harmony among the various schools of (Indian) philosophy is established ; it will be demonstrated later on, and it is this interpretation alone which bhagavān Vedavyāsa has set forth in the Bhagavadgītā and in the Chapter of "Mokṣa-dharma" of Śānti-parvan in the Mahābhārata; this is to be stated that Śrīmat Śaṁkarācārya, who is endowed with supreme wisdom, lapsed into error in this matter. Now, if one looks for the cause of this error it is seen that among other reasons, one main reason is that in trying to find out the true significance of Vedānta Darśana 3.2.11, he had lapsed into error. In his commentaries on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (and elsewhere) he has himself affirmed the saguṇattva of Brahman as the intended meaning of the śrutis. It is owing to this lapse of his on interpreting this sūtra that he seems to have fallen into error in his discussion on the nature of Parabrahman. Sometimes, even men of surpassing wisdom (and knowledge) lapse into error ; it is not surprising therefore that even he (Śaṁkarācārya) should commit an error ; from a perusal of his biography it is learnt that at the time of his life when he had written his commentaries (bhāṣyas) he had not become an infallible Truth-seer (tattva-darśin) ; it is true that many yogic powers of his were displayed by that time ; nevertheless, even then he had not become a fully enlightened Truth-seer, that he had not yet attained that supremely advanced stage of yoga at which the yogin is able to have full and instant knowledge regarding any matter through meditation. From this mention of his lapse into error therefore one would not be justified in suspecting the possibility of similar lapses on the part of the ācārya ṛṣis too. While

discussing Vedānta Darśana this sūtra (3.2.11) will be explained following the instructions of the earlier "ācāryas".

Though it is very difficult to cite wholly appropriate examples to render this apparently self-contradictory dual status of Brahman intelligible, to facilitate the understanding somewhat, one or two examples in accordance with the Śruti are given below :

It has been seen earlier during our discussion on Jñāna-yoga that the states of my body like childhood, youth and old-age are constantly changing ; streams of thought are flowing in our minds in a continuous succession, one after another; distress after happiness, happiness after distress— these experiences are continuously following one another in alternate succession. Whatever bodily state, whatever thought, whatever experience (bhoga) occurs, at the time of its occurrence, I feel it as belonging to myself— as my own. Nevertheless, though this is so, it is seen on reflection that in the midst of these changes, "I" remain untouched by them. My natural self-intuition too confirms this. When these states are over I feel about them like someone unconcerned (indifferent). It is evident therefore that having these states and, being separate and distinct from them— these two apparently mutually contradictory characteristics are all the time present in me. I become subject to these various states, become sometimes happy, sometimes unhappy, and yet, I remain also and at the same time, as beyond them, as mere witness (to them). The same is true of the Paramātmā. In His true nature He is eternal, beyond the guṇas, devoid of all distinctive characteristics, and yet, the guṇas too are perpetually associated with Him ; He is both the possessor of guṇas (guṇin) and devoid of all guṇas (nirguṇa).

All Jivas have an innate self-intuition regarding the dual status also of external objects; all external objects are characterized by the fine sensory qualities— sound, touch, form, taste and smell; all these qualities can be perceived by our sense-organ. These qualities are perpetually changing. The (innate) qualities of every object are perpetually changing ;

and yet it is our insurmountable conviction that in the midst of all this change the underlying substratum of these qualities remain unchanged ; “the very object I had seen before, I am seeing this moment also”— this kind of recognition (pratyavijñā) is present in all jīvas.⁴⁸ Hence, the dual status of external objects too is confirmed by self-intuition.

Another example taken from the external world is being cited. During dreams I perform various activities, see various places, talk to and have intercourse with people of many sorts— this is common knowledge. And yet, it must be admitted that at that time, “I” remain as only the spectator of these actions and objects— unchanged. Various objects seen during dreams, such as elephants, horses, buildings and so on ; the experience of joys and sorrows and so on ; actions like going and staying ; all these are products of my mind. “I” am a mere spectator of these and remain separate and distinct from them— unchangeable. And yet, during the very same period of times I am endowed with the power by virtue of which “I” am producing these things and being identified with them. The nature of Brahman too is like this. In His Essence, He is self-established, attributeless (nirguṇa) ; and yet again, being endowed with Power, He is bringing about the cosmic process and becoming identified with it.

For the satisfaction of our logical intellect another matter may be mentioned at this point. Every religious and spiritual tradition (sampradāya) acknowledges that Brahman is Full and complete in Himself ; He is free from all wants and deficiencies. The Brhadāranyaka and other Upaniṣads too have through śrutis like “pūrṇamadaḥ ” affirmed the fullness (pūrṇatā) of Brahman. It is evident now that on the one hand, just as the absence of guṇas detracts from the fullness of Brahman so, on the other hand, the lack of “nirguṇatva” too derogates from the fullness of Brahman. Hence, to bring about His

⁴⁸ Particular “drk-śaktis” are the substrata of these particular combinations of guṇas, and both these are established in the ultimate Substatum— Brahman— this has been stated before.

fullness, if, following the Śruti, this dual status of His Being is affirmed, it cannot even be said to be contrary to logic.

That two opposite qualities cannot, indeed, exist in the same object is the innate conviction of everyone. Nevertheless, one must remember at this point that this notion is natural and valid only in regard to the quality (or characteristic— dharma) of an object. This notion of self-contradiction is not however applicable to the relation between the subject (dharmin) and the predicate (dharma) or the object and its qualities ; the moment the term "an object possessing attributes" (dharma) is mentioned one has an insurmountable conviction that it is itself beyond its attributes (or qualities) and that these attributes too are the characteristics of this transcendent subject or substratum is the innate and natural conviction of all Jīvas ; hence, every object is, in its essence, beyond its attributes and yet, at the same time, endowed with them ; there is not the slightest contradiction in this. In His true Essence, Brahman is beyond the guṇas (guṇātīta) and yet He is the ultimate Ground of infinite guṇas ; This is what the śruti has affirmed ; in this (assertion) there is not the slightest apprehension of any fallacy.

It is the second state of Brahman – 'Brahman-as-Īśvara' - mentioned in this Quarter (Pāda) that has been described by the ṛṣis by the name of "Nārāyaṇa" or in some places, Vāsudeva ; He has also been called Viṣṇu, or Mahāmāyā and other names by the Śruti and the ṛṣis. He is, in reality "saguṇa Brahman". It is He — Brahman as Īśvara— who is the highest Deity to be worshipped and meditated on; for, it is in this saguṇa aspect that Brahman is related to the world and so, can be an object of "Upāsanā" (worship and meditation) ; when the sādḥaka, through worshipping and meditating on Him becomes pure in heart, he, naturally and inevitably knows himself as Brahman, and later, merging in the ultimate Ground of all, Parabrahman, attains union with Him. In Chapter XIII of Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā, it is this which has been set forth :

bhaktyā māmabhijānāti yāvān yascāśmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tadanantaram. (18.55)

— Through Parābhakti he (the sādḥaka) knows Me fully and in Essence what I am like and what My true Nature is. Thus knowing Me in My Essential Being he then enters none but Myself.

Now, the cosmic Creation by the saḡuṇa Brahman as Nārāyaṇa will be specifically described by an examination of the śrutis that have been quoted earlier.

The Aitareya Upaniṣad, after stating “sa īkṣata lokān nusṛjā iti” goes on to declare : “sa imālokaṇasṛjata” (That Brahman created these worlds). But, as to how, in what order, Creation gradually unfolded Itself, the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (which belongs to the Sāmaveda) says, that at first the determination to create arose in Īśvara.⁴⁹ As, for instance : “tadaikṣata bahusyām prajāyeyeti” (Chāndogya Upaniṣad)— That Brahman contemplated thus : “I shall become many, I shall produce Myself and multiply”.

Brahman as Nārāyaṇa, who represents the state of Reality before Creation has already been mentioned. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad then goes on to describe the beginning of Creation. That part of the Power of Lord Nārāyaṇa which exists as the visible world as

⁴⁹ After stating, “Brahman created the words”, the Aitareya Upaniṣad says afterwards that Brahman created “Ambhas” (the heavens), “Marīci” (Bhūrloka- the terrestrial Realm) and so on. Śaṃkara Svāmī explains this thus : creating first, the other etheareal realms, He created the grosser cosmic manifestations like the heavens; this is the real purport of the Śruti. The subtle substances that He created in between will be shown gradually here following other Śrutis.

unmanifest is aroused at the beginning of Creation— this is known as “rajaguna”. The “dr̥śya-śakti” which remained in Nārāyaṇa as unmanifest — this “rajoguna” is inherent in that ; that unmanifest “dr̥śya-śakti”, being moved somewhat by it (rajoguna) is transformed into a determinative attitude, and the “dr̥k- śakti” too being associated with it, directs itself to this determinative intelligence, when, the dr̥k- śakti becomes combined with buddhi-śakti (the power of the higher intelligence). The guṇas however cannot exist without an underlying base or substratum (āśraya) ; hence, Brahman as the ultimate Ground (āśraya) too is infused in it ; consequently, His true Nature remains hidden at that state.⁵⁰ The Puruṣa who remains, assuming this determinative Intelligence is called “kṣetrajña”. He is also designated “sūtrātmā” or “Hiraṇyagarbha”; He has also been mentioned, in some places of the Purāṇas, as Saṁkarṣaṇa.⁵¹ Prakṛti which forms the external body of Nārāyaṇa, the ancient Puruṣa, is unmanifest; however, the Buddhi in its pure form exists as the external body of the ‘kṣetrajña’ Puruṣa; it is this buddhi that appears as His manifested body. Hence, it is the Hiraṇyagarbha who is considered the First Puruṣa of the manifested cosmos. Since Buddhi forms the external part of His Being, the jīva is fully capable of meditating on Him. Just as, by the form of an ordinary jīva, he can be meditated on so, through His outward Form, Buddhi, He (Hiraṇyagarbha) can be meditated on. Just as, meditation on the visible form of a person is meditation of the person himself so, pure Intelligence (Buddhi) which is present in varying degree in all

⁵⁰ The same applies to every subsequent stage of creation described afterwards. Parabrahman alone is the ultimate Ground (substratum) of the manifested cosmos ; without this ultimate Ground, Parabrahman, the manifested cosmos, constituted of guṇas cannot exist.

⁵¹ In some places He has also been named “Vāsudeva” ; in some other places however, “vāsudeva” signifies nirguṇa Brahman, and in some texts, it is the earlier-mentioned Brahman as Nārāyaṇa, the saguṇa Brahman, who has been so designated. This is only a difference in language; essentially, there is no difference. It has been stated in the Bhagavadgītā that “Vāsudeva is all this”— “Vāsudevaḥ sarvaṁ”.

human beings— meditation on that is tantamount to meditation on Him (Hiraṇyagarbha). This meditation is within the capacity of Man. During the “sāttvika” state of “suṣupti” (deep, dreamless sleep) only Pure knowledge independent of any object, remains; it is through this state of suṣupti that one can be distinguished from one who is dead ; no particular entity then exists as an object of knowledge. This state of pure Knowledge is doubtless extremely subtle ; nevertheless, pondered deeply, it becomes intelligible. It is through this that Hiraṇyagarbha becomes accessible to meditation. “Let there be Creation, I shall become many, let Me be born” (manifested)— this, and only this is what constitutes the determinative Intelligence (niścayātmikā Buddhi) which has been described as the external Form of Hiraṇyagarbha. Nothing else however, had appeared till then; hence, nothing then existed as the object of knowledge. Truth-seeing (ancient Indian) philosophers had characterized the Puruṣa in this state as “Mahat-tattva”; for, He is capable of grasping as His object of knowledge the entire cosmos, manifested at a later stage. Buddhi therefore is all-pervasive; hence its name “Mahat”. This pure, objectless knowledge is called “sattva-guṇa”. The earlier-mentioned “rajoguṇa” is essentially what is involved in all “movement” (calana) ; “sattva-guṇa” on the other hand is essentially Knowledge (jñāna). whenever there is any act of movement anywhere it should be understood as an expression of rajoguṇa and wherever there is any act of knowledge, the manifestation of sattva-guṇa must be known to exist. These two guṇas (sattva and rajas) remain merged in the earlier-mentioned “avyaktā Prakṛti” in an inert and latent state. Apart from these two, there is another guṇa — “tamoguṇa”; it is obstructive of both sattva-guṇa and rajo guṇa (knowledge and activity). In the cosmic principle of primordial Prakṛti this “tamoguṇa” too is reduced to inactivity; for, in this state, there is no manifestation of “sattva” and “rajas” ; the power which manifests itself by abstracting both these guṇas cannot therefore have manifestation of any kind in the absence of their appearance. In

reality, it is this state of inert equilibrium of the three guṇas that is called "Prakṛti"; Prakṛti is not an entity distinct from these three guṇas.

It has been said earlier that Creation begins with the awakening of the dynamic rajoguṇa. Driven by this rajoguṇa the unmanifest Prakṛti appears first as sattvagūṇa which in its essence, is knowledge (the determinative Intelligence); along with this, tamoguṇa, moved a little takes hold of the Puruṣa dwelling in Buddhi. Rajoguṇa is dynamic and mobile; tamoguṇa is obfuscative in nature; it is essentially delusive; it manifests itself by causing indolence and dullness. This obfuscating tamoguṇa, manifesting itself a little and having taken hold of the Puruṣa, the self-knowledge of the Puruṣa indwelling Buddhi is obstructed. Hence, only the knowledge that He is separate and distinct from Buddhi remains in the First Person called Hiraṇyagarbha. The true nature of "dr̥k-śakti" (Consciousness, Cit-śakti) remains unknown to the Buddhi-indwelling Puruṣa. In the last Section it has been thoroughly discussed.

How, from Mahat-tattva, Ahaṁ-tattva and from this (Ahaṁ -tattva) the eleven sense-organs including manas, the fine subtle cosmic elements and the fine gross cosmic elements are manifested and how through the various combinations of these "tattvas" (Cosmic Principles) the diverse worlds peopled by various jīvas are created have been stated in the preceding section. To avoid repetition it is not recounted here further. Briefly this much can be said that the Śruti declares :

teasmajjāyate prāṇaḥ manaḥ sarvendriyāṇi ca; khaṁ vāyuh".....

-- From this Brahman the Prāṇas (vital breath), manas, all sense-organs, ākāśa, vāyu (air)..... all these have been born (produced).

Through this śruti, it has been specifically affirmed that it is Brahman who is the Creator of all beings and objects in the cosmos comprising moving as well as immobile entities

and "producing this strange and manifold Universe entered It" (tatsrṣṭvā tadevānuprāviśat) and "entering the created cosmos as the jīva" (anena jīvenātmanānupraviśya) — it has been established by these statements that the enjoyer (experiencer) of the world, the Jīva too is an integral part (amśa) of Brahman Himself. But, just as Brahman as the "bhoktā" (enjoyer) Jīva is infused everywhere so, as the Controller of this cosmos with all its jīvas and the Ground of All, He is present everywhere ; regarding this, the Śruti says : "dwelling in the hearts of all Beings (jīvas), He rules them" (antaḥ praviṣṭaḥ śāstā janānām). It is not that, after creating the "jīva-śaktis" and the "Jagat", Brahman, remains separate from them; dwelling in the hearts of all, He is controlling all beings. The earlier quoted śrutis from the Taittirīya Upaniṣad like : "yena jātāni jīvanti" (Through Him all beings that are born, live) have revealed the same ; to sustain and control the cosmos after Creation— that too is the function of the divine power (aiśī-śakti) of Parabrahman. To explain this dual nature (of Brahman) the śruti from the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad quoted in the last Quarter states :

dvā suparnā sayujā sakhāyā
 samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte,
 tayo ranyaḥ pippalam svādvattya
 naśnannanyo'bhicākaśīti. (4.6)

samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno
 anīśayā śocati muḥyamānaḥ,
 juṣṭam yadā paśyatyanyamīśamasya
 mahimānamiti vītaśokaḥ (4.7)

This much from the Śruti— so far. It will be shown now how the great ṛṣis themselves, following the Śruti, have explained the nature of Brahman, of jīva and of jagat in the Smṛti, Itihāsa and so on.

(2) Smṛti

(A) The Mahābhārata, Śāntiparvan, Mokṣadharmaparvādhyāya ; The Dialogue between Vaśiṣṭha and Karāla—Janaka

In the Mokṣadharmaparvādhyāyas of Śāntiparvan in the Mahābhārata and in “Adhyāyas” (Chapters) of Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā, of Bhīṣmaparvan, the great ṛṣi Vedavyāsa has expounded Brahmanavidyā extensively through diverse tales and in various ways. Those who wish to know Brahmanavidyā well should study deeply these Mokṣadharmaparvādhyāyas and the Bhagavadgītā. In XIth ‘scandha’ of Śrīmad Bhāgavata also this Brahmanavidyā has been set forth very clearly through various narratives and in diverse ways. That too should always be read with a concentrated mind. That the Mahābhārata is composed by the blessed sage Vedavyāsa himself is universally acknowledged and indisputable, so, a few revelatory discourses from the Śāntiparvan in the Mahābhārata are being quoted below; the discourse on Brahmanavidyā that was held between the great ṛṣi Vaśiṣṭha and the king Karāla—Janaka has been related by Bhagavān Vedavyāsa in the Śāntiparvan, from Chapter 302 onwards through several Chapters. There it has been related thus :

Śāntiparvan: Chapter 302

vaśiṣṭham śreṣṭhamāśīnamṛṣīnām bhāskaradyutim,
papraccha janako rājā jñānam naiḥśreyasam param. (8)

* * * * *
bhagavan śrotumicchāmi param brahma sanātanam,
yaśmānna punarāvṛttimāpnuvanti manīṣiṇaḥ. (11)

yacca tatkṣaramityuktaṁ yatredaṁ kṣarate jagat,
yaccākṣaramiti proktaṁ śivam kṣemya manāmayam (12)

— Seeing Vaśiṣṭha, the greatest among the sages, radiant like the sun, seated (in āsana) the king Janaka asked him about the Knowledge that leads to mokṣa. (8)

— O, Blessed one! I wish to hear about the supreme, eternal Brahman, attaining whom the sages never return to this saṁsāra (phenomenal world). (11)

— I would like to know about the Jagat (world) which is known as “kṣara” and that in which this jagat as “kṣara” (mutable) dissolves; I would also like to know about that Entity which liberates us from saṁsāra, Who is all-Bliss and bereft of opposites and immutable (akṣara). (12)

śrūyatām pṛthivīpāla kṣaratīdam yathā jagat,
yanna kṣarati pūrveṇa yāvatkālena vāpyatha. (13)

— Vaśiṣṭha said O, King! The manner in which this world is destroyed and that which had never been destroyed before and will never be destroyed— I am going to tell, listen.

yugaṁ dvādaśśāhasraṁ kalpaṁ viddhi caturyugam,
daśakalpa śatāvṛttamahastad brāhmamucyate (14)

— (in the reckoning of the gods) twelve thousand years make one “yuga”, four yugas make a “kalpa”, one thousand kalpas make a single day of Brahmā.

rātriścaitāvatī rājan yasyānte pratibudhyate,
srjatyantakarmāṇaṁ mahāntaṁ bhūtamagrajam. (15)

mūrtimantamamūrtātmā viśvaṁ śambhuḥ svayambhuvaḥ,
aṇīmā laghimā prāptirīśānaṁ jyotiravyayam. (16)

— O, king! His night too lasts as long ; then He is reawakened. The Blessed Lord Śambhu (Śiva), who is eternally unmanifest, created Brahmā; who (Brahmā) is self-effulgent, the great first-born among beings, who is manifest in the cosmos, who is endowed with yogic supernatural powers like aṇīmā, laghimā and so on, controller of All, imperishable, who is resplendent (that is, the Revealer of all things) and the Agent of innumerable mighty acts. (15 ; 16)

hiraṇyagarbha bhagavāneṣa buddhiriti smṛtaḥ,
mahāniti ca yogeṣu biriñciriti cāpyajaḥ.

(18)

— It is He (this Brahmā) is designated in the śāstras as Lord Hiraṇyagarbha and as Buddhi and in the Yoga śāstra He has been called “Mahat”; it is He again who has been celebrated in the śāstras as “Viriñci” and “Aja”.

(18)

* * * *

eṣa vai vikriyāpannaḥ sṛjatyātmānamātmanā,
ahamkāraṁ mahātejāḥ prajāpatimahamkr̥taṁ.

(21)

— It is He who, undergoing transformation, created from His own Body “Ahamkāra” and the Puruṣa called “Prajāpati”, whose Essence is “Ahamkāra” and who is full of great radiance.

(21)

avyaktādvaktamāpannam vidyāsargaṁ vadanti tam,
mahāntam cāpyahamkāramavidyāsargameva ca.

(22)

— The “Mahat” (Viriñci) who is manifested from the Unmanifest (avyakta) is called “vidyā-sarga” (knowledge-creation) and this “Ahamkāra” is called “avidyā-sarga” (Ignorance-Creation).

bhūtasargamahamkārāt tṛtīyaṁ viddhi pāṛthiva,
ahamkāreṣu sarveṣu caturthaṁ viddhi vaikṛtaṁ.

(24)

— O, king! The third bhūtasarga (creation of the cosmic elements) has sprung from this Ahaṁkāra, you should know, through the transformation of Ahaṁkāra the fourth creation, that of the 'indriyas' has taken place.
(24)

vāyurjyotirathākāśamapo'tha pṛthivī tathā
śabdaḥ sparśaśca rūpaṁ ca raso gandastathaiva ca. (25)

* * * * *
śrotram tvak cakṣuṣī jihvā ghrāṇamevaca pañcamam.
vāk ca hastau ca pādaḥ ca pāyurmedhram tathaiva ca. (27)

buddhīndriyāṇi caitāni tathā karmendriyāṇi ca
sambhūtānīha yugapanmanasā saha pāṛthiva. (28)

eṣā tattvacaturviṁśā sarvākṛtiṣu vartate,
yām jñātvā nābhiśocanti brāhmaṇāḥstattvadarśinaḥ. (29)

etaddeham samākhyātam trailokye sarvadehiṣu,
veditavyam naraśreṣṭha sadeva naradānave (30)

* * * * *
— Earth, water, fire, air and Void ; sound, touch, form, taste and smell ; śrotra (auditory sense-organ), tvak (tactual organ), cakṣus (the visual organ), tongue and nose ; vāk, pāṇi, pāyu, pāda, upastha.

— these jñānendriyas (cognitive sense organs) and karmendriyas (organs of action) have been created along with “manas”. These twenty four cosmic Principles are present in all objects with visible forms; knowing this, the Truth-seeing brāhmaṇas become free from distress; O king, the foremost among men! In the three worlds, in relation to all beings, including the gods, the human beings and the demons, you should know these (twenty four cosmic principles) as constituting their bodies.

(25, 27, 28, 29, 30)

* * * * *

kṛtsnametāvatastāta kṣarate vyaktasamjñitam,
ahanyahani bhūtātmā tataḥ kṣara iti smṛtaḥ.

(35)

— O my son! This entire cosmos comprising all the elements and beings in the manifested state is decaying everyday; hence it is called “kṣara” (subject to change and decay).

(35)

etadakṣaramityuktaṁ kṣaratīdaṁ yathā jagat,
jaganmohātmakam prāhuravyaktādvyakta samjñakam.

(36)

— But the Puruṣa as “Pratyagātman” is called “Akṣara”; as it is perishable by nature, the visible cosmos is called “jagat”; this “jagat” which is manifested from the unmanifest is delusive in nature.

(36)

mahāṁścaivāgrajo'nityametad kṣara-nidarśanam,
kathitaṁ te mahārāja yanmām tvam paripṛcchasi.

(37)

— The “Mahat” that appeared first of all at the time of Creation, that too, is subject to constant decay ; know this to be the primary (and supreme) example of kṣara; o, great king! I have now told what you asked me about.

(37)

pañcaviṁśatimo viṣṇurnistattvastattvasamjñītaḥ,
tattvasam śrayaṇādetattvamāhurmanīṣīṇaḥ.

(38)

— Viṣṇu, the twenty-fifth tattva, though beyond tattvas (tattvātīta), is named “Tattva”; being associated with the tattvas He is called as such— as “Tattva”— by the sages.

(38)

yanmartyamsrjadvyaktaṁ tattannurttiyadhitiṣṭhati,
caturviṁśatimo'vyaktaṁ hyamūrtaḥ pañcaviṁśakaḥ

(39)

— The mortal manifested forms He creates— in every one of them He dwells. The twenty fourth (Principle) Prakṛti is unmanifest (avyakta), and the twenty-fifth Principle too is “amūrta” (devoid of form).

(39)

sa eva hr̥di sarvāsu mūrtiṣvātiṣṭhatetmavān,
kevalaścetano nityaḥ sarvamūrtiramūrtimān.

(40)

— That twenty-fifth Principle, Puruṣa dwells in the hearts of all manifested forms ; and yet, He is (possessed of) Pure Self and “nirguṇa”, Pure consciousness in His Essence and eternal ; though manifest in all visible forms He is Himself formless.

(40)

sargapralayadharminyā sa sarga pralayātmakaḥ,
gocare vartate nityaṁ nirguṇaṁ guṇasamjñitam. (41)

— Owing to the association with Prakṛti which is characterized by genesis and dissolution, the Ātman, though He is nirguṇa, appears always as endowed with the characteristic of Creation and Dissolution. (41)

evameṣa mahānātmā sargapralayakovidāḥ,
vikurvāṇaḥ prakṛtimānabhimanyatyabuddhimān. (42)

— Thus the Great Ātman experiences Creation and Dissolution and bringing about the Creative Process becomes identified with it, through Ignorance. (42)

tamaḥsattvarajoyuktastāsu tāsviha yoniṣu,
līyate pratibuddhatvādabuddhajanasevanāt. (43)

— He (Ātman) becomes identified with the bodies that are made of the three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas) owing to association with ignorant beings (persons) and ignorance. (43)

sahavāsavināśitvānnānyo'hamiti manyate
yo'haṁ so'hamiti hyuktvā guṇānevānuvartate. (44)

— On account of living constantly with perishable objects He cannot regard His Self as separate and distinct from them ; saying to Himself, "I am so and so, I am such and such," He feels the guṇas as belonging to Himself, follows them. (44)

tamasā tāmasān bhāvān vividhān pratipadyate,
rajasā rājasāmścaiva sāttvikān sattva samśrayāt. (45)

— being overcome with tamas, He experiences tāmasa states like anger, being overcome with rajas He does various rājasa actions, and filled with sattva performs acts which are sāttvika in character. (45)

Chapter : 303

Vaśiṣṭha said :

Evamapratibuddhatvādabuddhamanuvartate,
dehāddeha dehāddehasahasrāṇi tathā samabhipadyate. (1)

Thus the Puruṣa, being blinded by Ignorance follows the ignorant Prakṛti and assumes one body after another through thousands of births.

* * * * *

abhimanyatya sambodhāttathaiva trividhān guṇān,
sattvaṁ rajastamaścaiva dharmarthī kāma eva ca.

(27)

— Thus that Puruṣa, through Ignorance, comes to think that the three guṇas, sattva, rajas and tamas, as well as the three objects of human pursuit, dharma (discharge of duties), artha (acquisition of wealth), kāma (gratification of desires) — all these belong to Him. (27)

Chapter- 305

Janaka said :

akṣarakṣarayoreṣa dvayoḥ sambandha iṣyate,
strīpum̐sorvāpi bhagavan sambandhastadvaducyate. (1)

— The king Janaka said, O Bhagavan! Just as a man and a woman desire union with each other so, Akṣara and kṣara (Puruṣa and Prakṛti) desire the relation of mutual union.

(1)

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anyonyaguṇa samrodhādanyonya guṇa-samśrayāt,
evamevābhisambaddhau nityaṁ prakṛtipuruṣau. (8)

paśyāmi bhagavaṁstasmānmokṣadharmo na vidyate. (9)

— Being bounded by the guṇas (characteristics) of each other and united one with the other (that is the Puruṣa having, by obstructing the dullness of Prakṛti by conferring on Her His own blissfull state and Prakṛti, having, by obstructing the blissfullness of the Puruṣa, offering Him Her own dullness) Prakṛti and Puruṣa are eternally associated with each other; therefore, o, Bhagavan! I do not see the possibility of mokṣa. (8, 9)

Vaśiṣṭha said:

dravyāddravyasya nirvṛttirindriyādindriyaṁ tathā,
dehāddehamavāpnoti bījādbījaṁ tathaiva ca. (21)

nirindriyasyābījasya nirdravyasyāpadehinaḥ,
kathaṁ guṇā bhaviṣyanti nirguṇatvānmahātmanaḥ. (22)

guṇā guṇeṣu jāyante tatraiva niviśanti ca,
evam guṇāḥ prakṛtito jāyante niviśanti ca. (23)

* * * * *

— Vaśiṣṭha said, 'it is from substances that (other) substances are produced, from sense-organs, (other) sense-organs, from bodies (other) bodies and from seeds (other) seeds. But Puruṣa is neither indriya (sense-organ) nor bīja (seed) nor dravya (substance), and He is not embodied; how can the guṇas issue from the great-souled Puruṣa who is nirguṇa? The guṇas issue from guṇas and dissolve in them; thus the guṇas issue only from Prakṛti and also dissolve in it. (21, 22, 23)

* * * * *

pumāmścaivāpumāmścaiva trailiṅgaṁ prākṛtaṁ smṛtaṁ,
na vā'pumān pumāmścaiva sa lingītyabhidhīyate. (25)

— The Jīva called Puruṣa and the world of visible objects (apumān— not Puruṣa) and the suffering and enjoyments (bhoga) that results from the combination of both— all these three are stated to belong to Prakṛti. Although it is true that the embodied Ātman is called Puruṣa because He dwells in the body (Pur) as its abode, He is in His Essence beyond the body.

* * * * *

evamapy anumānena hyaliṅgamupalabhyate
pañcaviṁśatimastāta li niyavātmakaḥ. (27)

— Through an analysis of this kind the indiscernible (aliṅga) Ātman is apprehended ; so, the Puruṣa as the twenty-fifth tattva is combined with a body. (27)

anādinidhano'nantaḥ sarvadarśīnirāmayah
kevalaṁ tvabhimānitvād guṇeṣu guṇa ucyate. (28)

— And yet He is without beginning or end (eternal), all-seeing, free from all sorrows and sufferings, nirguṇa ; it is only on account of being associated with guṇas through "ahamkāra" He is called "guṇa".

guṇā guṇāvataḥ santi nirguṇasya kuto guṇāḥ,

tasmādevaṁ vijānanti ye janā guṇadarśinaḥ. (29)

— Guṇas exist only in one possessed of guṇas; how can the guṇas exist in one who is devoid of all guṇas (nirguṇa)? Hence, persons who know the nature of guṇas know this to be so. (29)

yadā tveṣa guṇānetān prākṛtānabhimanyate,
tadā sa guṇahānyaitat paramevānupaśyati. (30)

— When the Jīva comes to know these guṇas to be as inherent in Prakṛti (know himself as distinct from the guṇas), it is only then that he becomes rid of all guṇas and attains the realization of Paramātmā. (30)

aprabuddhamathāvyaktamaguṇaṁ prāhurīśvaram
nirguṇaṁ ceśvaram nityamadhiṣṭhatārameva ca. (32)

— It is that Paramatman who is called Īśvara; and yet He is inaccessible to human knowledge; He cannot be known by any mark or characteristic; He is devoid of all guṇa and yet omnipotent, the supreme Lord (Īśvara) and the presiding Spirit of the entire cosmos and the inner Controller of all. (32)

prakṛteśca guṇāñca pañcaviṁśatikam budhāḥ,
sāṁkhyayoge ca kuśalā budhyante paramaiṣiṇaḥ. (33)

— The sages following the path of Sāṃkya-yoga come to know through meditation the twenty-fifth Puruṣa in the midst of Prakṛti and the guṇas. (33)

* * * * *

paraspareṇaitaduktam kṣarākṣara-nidarśanam,
ekatvamakṣaram prāhurnānātvaṃ kṣaramucyate. (36)

— Thus, through their reciprocity the difference between the kṣara and the akṣara can be indicated; it is Oneness that is denoted by Akṣara and the multiplicity that is known as Kṣara. (36)

pañcaviṃśatiniṣṭho'yaṃ yadā samyak pravartate,
ekatvaṃ darśanam cāśya nānātvaṃ cāpyadarśanam. (37)

— When this Jīva becomes established in the twenty fifth tattva, then, and then only does the knowledge of "Advaita" arise in him and it is when his self-knowledge is absent that he experiences multiplicity (differences and distinctions). (37)

tattvanistattvayoretat prthageva nidarśanam,
pañcaviṃśatisargam tu tattvamāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ. (38)

— The mark of distinction between "tattva" and "nistattva" is indeed that it is these twenty five creations that the sages designate as "tattvas". (38)

nistattvaṃ pañcaviṃśasya paramāhurnidarśanam,
sargasya vargamācāram tattvaṃ tattvāt sanātanam. (39)

— It is Paramātmān who is the “nistattva” (void of all tattvas) state of the twenty fifth (cosmic principle) Puruṣa; it is this eternal Paramātmān who is the ultimate goal (Ground) of the twenty five created principles (tattvas); He is the supreme Tattva beyond the twenty-five created ones. (39)

Chapter— 306

Vaśiṣṭha Said :-

Yogadarśanametāvaduktam te tattvato mayā,
sāṁkhyajñānam pravakṣyami parisāṁkhyānadarśanam. (26)

— I have set forth the Yoga philosophy fully in its essence. Now, the knowledge of the Sāṁkhya (Philosophy) that has been set forth in numerical succession in one tattva following another— will be thoroughly expounded. (26)

avyaktamāhuḥ prakṛtiṁ parāṁ prakṛtivādinah,
tasmānmahat samutpannam dvitīyaṁ rājasattama. (27)

— Those who uphold Prakṛti (as the Reality) has called the “parā” (the higher) Prakṛti as “Avyakta” (the Unmanifest) ; O, the best among kings! from this Prakṛti, the second Creation (created Principle), “Mahat” is produced. (27)

ahamkārastu mahatastrīyamiti naḥ śrutam
pañcabhūtānyahamkāradāhuḥ sāṁkhyātmadarśinah. (28)

— The third cosmic Principle called “ahamkāra” is produced from the “Mahat”— it has been stated in the śāstras. Persons who are versed in the knowledge of the Sāṃkhya (Philosophy) have affirmed that from this “ahamkāra” the five gross (cosmic) elements have been created. (28)

etāḥ prakṛtayaścāṣṭau vikārāścāpi ṣoḍaśa,
pañca caiva viśeṣāvai tathā pañcendriyāṇi ca. (29)

— These eight tattvas are called the eight-fold Prakṛti; apart from these, there are sixteen “viśeṣas” (transformations) ; of these the earlier-mentioned five gross elements are characterised as five “viśeṣas” (Specific or particular entities) and the (eleven) “indriyas” too are called “viśeṣas”. (29)

etāvadeva tattvānām sāmkhya māhurmanīṣiṇaḥ,
sāmkhye vidhividhānāṁ nityam sāmkhya pathe ratāḥ (30)

— The sages who know the rules and laws of the Sāṃkhya śāstra and who are perpetually devoted to the Sāṃkhya way, have mentioned this much as the number of the tattvas. (30)

yasmādyadabhijāyeta tat tatraiva pralīyate.
līyante pratilomāni sṛjyante cāntarātmanā. (31)

— That from which something originates is also that in which it dissolves. It is through association with the "antarātman" (the inner Ātman) that Creation is set in motion. (31)

anulomena jāyante liyante pratilomataḥ,
guṇā guṇeṣu satataṁ sāgarasyormayo yathā. (32)

— Creation takes place in the natural (downward) course while Dissolution occurs against the natural course (upwards); like the successive waves on the sea, the world, constituted of guṇas resides in the guṇas. (32)

sargapralaya etāvān prakṛternṛpasattama,
ekatvaṁ pralaye cāsyā vahutvañca yadāsrjat. (33)

— O, the best of kings! know creation and Dissolution to be such. In Dissolution, He (Puruṣa) is one, in creation He becomes Many. (33)

evameva ca rājendra vijñeyaṁ jñānako vidaiḥ,
adhiṣṭātāramavyaktamasyāpyetannidarśanam. (34)

— O, the chief among kings! the unmanifest Ātman too, who dwells in (and presides over) Puruṣa as Jīva, the sages know by this distinguishing mark. (34)

ekattvañca vahuttvañca prakṛterarthatattvavān,
ekatvaṁ pralaye cāsyā vahuttvañca pravartanāt. (35)

— It is through the knowledge of the constituent Prakṛti that the unity and the plurality of the Puruṣa occur; unity in Dissolution and plurality in Creation. (35)

vahudhātmā prakurvīta prakṛtiṁ prasavātmikām,
tacca kṣetram mahānātmā pañcaviṁśo'dhitiṣṭhati. (36)

— O the chief of kings! the Puruṣa divides the Prakṛti in diverse ways; all these are called "kṣetra" (field, body); in that kṣetra Ātman as the twenty-fifth Puruṣa dwells. (36)

adhiṣṭāte rājendra procyate yatisattamaiḥ,
adhiṣṭānādadhiṣṭāta kṣetrāṇāmi naḥ śrutam. (37)

— O the supreme among beings! The great ascetics (yati) call the Ātman "Adhiṣṭhātṛ" (the one who dwells); He is known as Adhiṣṭhātṛ because He occupies the "kṣetra" and dwells in it— this is what we have heard. (37)

kṣetram jñāti cāvyaktam kṣetrajña iti cocyate
avyaktike praviśate puruṣaśceti kathyate. (38)

— He knows "both the manifest and unmanifest kṣetra" — it is in this sense that He is named "Kṣetrajña" ; He can also be called Puruṣa because "He, after entering Prakṛti, exists in It. (38)

anyadeva ca kṣetram syādanyaḥ kṣetrajña ucyate,
kṣetramavyaktamityuktaṁ jñātāram pañcaviṁśakam. (39)

— Hence “kṣetra” and “Kṣetrajña” are different entities (the Kṣetrajña is separate and distinct from kṣetra) ; it is the “avyaktā Prakṛti” that is referred to as “kṣetra” and the Puruṣa who knows it is the “twenty fifth” (Principle). (39)

anyadeva ca jñānaṁ syādanyajjñeyaṁ taducyate
jñānamavyaktamityuktaṁ jñeyo vai pañcaviṁśakaḥ (40)

— Thus “knowledge” and the “knowable object” are said to be separate; it is the “avyaktā” Prakṛti that is “jñāna” while the twenty-fifth Principle, Puruṣa is the “jñeya”. (40)

avyaktaṁ kṣetramyuktaṁ tathā sattvaṁ tatheśvaraḥ,
anīśvaramatattvañca tatavaṁ tat pañcaviṁśakam. (41)

— The “avyakta” is also known as “kṣetra”, “sattva” (buddhi) and Īśvara while the twenty-fifth Principle, Puruṣa can be described as both “anīśvara” (not-Īśvara) and as both “atattva” (not-tattva) and “tattva”. (41)

* * * * *

Chapter— 307
Vaśiṣṭha Said:

sāṁkhyadarśanametāvaduktaṁ te nṛpasattama,
vidyāvidye tvidānīm me tvaṁ nibodhānupūrvaśaḥ (1)

— O, the best of kings! thus you have been told about the Sāṃkhya Philosophy. Now, I shall tell you about the difference between “vidyā” (knowledge) and “avidyā” (ignorance) in proper order. (1)

avidyāmāhuravyaktam sargapralayadharmi vai,
sargapralaya-nirmuktam vidyām vai pañcaviṃśakaḥ (2)

— The avyakta (unmanifest) which is characterized by Creation and Dissolution is called “avidyā” and the twenty-fifth, Puruṣa, who is free from both these characteristics Creation and Dissolution — is “vidyā” in relation to it. (2)

parasparasya vidyām vai tvam nibodhānnupūrvaśaḥ,
yathoktaṃṣibhistāta sāmkhyaśābhinidarśanam. (3)

— O, my son! the manner in which the followers of the knowledge of the Sāṃkhya have explained the reciprocal cognition (vidyā) of all the other tattvas — I am going to tell you ; listen. (3)

(4) karmendriyāṇām sarveṣām vidyā buddhīndriyaṃ smṛtam;
buddhīndriyāṇām ca tathā viśeṣa itī naḥ śrutam.

— The jñānendriyas are said to be the “vidyā” of the karmendriyas , the vidyā of the jñānendriyas is constituted by the “viśeṣas”. (4)

viśeṣāṇām manasteṣām vidyāmāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ,
manasaḥ pañcabhūtāni vidyā ityabhicakṣate.

(5)

— “Manas” is the vidyā of the “viśeṣas” and the five mahābhūtas are the vidyā of manas.

(5)

ahamkārastubhūtānām pañcānām nātra saṁśayaḥ
ahamkārasya ca tathā buddhirvidyā nareśvara.

(6)

— The vidyā of the pañca Mahābhūtas is ahamkāra and the vidyā of ahamkāra is “buddhi”.

(6)

vidyā prakṛtiravyaktam tattvānām parameśvarī,
vidyā jñeyā naraśreṣṭha vidhiśca paramaḥ smṛtaḥ.

(7)

— The vidyā of all tattvas is Prakṛti, the supreme “Īśvara”; O! the best among men! She is referred to as the supreme (paramā) vidyā.

(7)

avyaktasya paramprāhurvidyām vai pañcaviṁśakam,
sarvasya sarvamityuktaṁ jñeyam jñānasya pāṛthiva .

(8)

— But the twenty-fifth (tattva) Puruṣais the vidyā of even this “avyakta”; O, king! it is this “avyakta” which is the object of all knowledge. (8)

jñānamavyaktamityuktaṁ jñeyo vai pañcaviṁśakaḥ,
tathaiva jñānamavyaktaṁ vijñātā pañcaviṁśakaḥ. (9)

— It is this avyakta which is jñāna while the jñeya is the twenty-fifth (tattva) Puruṣa; The knower of this avyakta as jñāna is the twenty fifth Puruṣa. (9)

vidyā vidyārthatattvena mayoktā te viśeṣataḥ,
akṣaraṅca kṣaraṅcaiva yaduktaṁ tannibodha me. (10)

— I have told you the nature of “vidyā” and “vidyārtha” (the objects of “vidyā”) specifically in their true essence; hear (from me) now what are called “kṣara” and “akṣara”. (10)

ubhāvevākṣarāvuktāvubhāvetāvanakṣarau,
kāraṇaṁ tu pravakṣyāmi yathātathyaṁ tu jñānataḥ. (11)

— Both this Prakṛti and this Puruṣa can be described as both kṣara and akṣara; why this is so I am going to explain thoroughly. (11)

anādinidhanāvetāvubhāveveśvarau matau
tattvasamjñāvubhāvetau procyate jñācintakaiḥ. (12)

— Both (Prakṛti and Puruṣa) are “anādinidhāna” (without beginning and end), and so, are “Īśvara” ; the sages have described both as “tattvas”. (12)

sargapralayadharmatvāḍavyaktaṁ prāhurakṣaram,
tadetad guṇasargāya vikurvāṇaṁ punaḥ punaḥ. (13)

— All created things are subject to Dissolution ; it is for this reason that “avyakta” (Prakṛti) is called “akṣara” ; from this avyakta the guṇas are being created over and over again. (13)

guṇānāṁ mahadāḍīnāmutpattiśca parasparam.
adhiṣṭhānāt kṣetramāhuretat pañcaviṁśakam. (14)

— The origination of the guṇas beginning with “Mahat” takes place from it in succession ; the Puruṣa is always resident in it ; this is why it is called “kṣetra”. Thus Prakṛti too is described as “akṣara”. Now, the “akṣara”-nature of Puruṣa will be indicated; This Puruṣa as the twenty-fifth tattva (pañcaviṁśaka) is really the “Tat” that is Paramātman. (14)

yadā tu guṇajālaṁ tadavyaktātmani saṁkṣipet,
tadā saha guṇaistaistu pañcaviṁśo vidhīyate. (15)

— When He, established in the state of the unmanifest Paramātman, casts away all guṇas then and then only He deserves the appellation of “Tat”; but when He remains associated with the guṇas He is known as “pañcaviṁśaka”— the twenty-fifth (tattva).

guṇā guṇeṣu līyante tadaikā Prakṛtīrbhavet
kṣetrajño'pi yadā tāta tat kṣetre samprīyate.

(16)

— O, my son! when the “kṣetrajña” Puruṣa too merges in the “kṣetra” (when the Jīvātman merges in the Prakṛti-tattva) then all manifested guṇas too dissolve in Prakṛti which is constituted of guṇas and Prakṛti alone remains. (16)

tadā kṣaratvaṁ prakṛtīrgacchate guṇsamśritā
nirguṇatvaṁ ca vaideha guṇeṣvaprativartanāt.

(17)

— O, the king of Videha! When the Puruṣa, established in the nature of the Parmātman, returns no more to the guṇas then and then only does He attain “nirguṇatva”— the state of the nirguṇa - then the “guṇātmaka” Prakṛti too receives the appellation of “kṣara”. (17)

evameva ca kṣetrajñaḥ kṣetrajñānaparikṣaye,
prakṛtyā nirguṇastveṣa ityevamanuśuśrūma.

(18)

— Thus, the knowledge (perception) of the kṣetra having been wholly destroyed, this Puruṣa attains His true nature as “nirguṇa” ; the śruti has revealed it. (18)

kṣaro bhavatyēṣa yadā tadā guṇavatīmatha,
prakṛtiṁ tvabhijānāti nirguṇatvaṁ tathātmanah.

(19)

— When He becomes involved in Prakṛti then and then only is He kṣara; then attaining the nature of gunātmikā Prakṛti, He knows only Prakṛti; when, again, He becomes established in the nature of the Paramātmān, He is described as “nirguṇa” and “akṣara” (immutable).

(19)

Chapter— 308

Vasiṣṭha Said:

atha buddhamathābuddhamimam guṇavidhiṁ śṃu,
ātmānam bahudhā kṛtvā tānyeva pravicaṣate.

(1)

— O, king, Now, I am going to tell you about the “buddha” (enlightened) Paramātmān and the Ruler (controller) of the guṇas and also the unenlightened (abuddha) Jīva — listen. By producing a multiple division (fragmentation) of the Ātman, He contemplates them in their totality (comprehensively).

(1)

etadevaṁ vikurvāṇo budhyamāno na budhyate,
guṇān dhārayate hyeṣa sṛjatyākṣipate tadā.

(2)

— Having done this, He becomes their Knower (Organizer) ; hence, His Self-knowledge is lost ; He then holds the guṇas within His own-self and brings about their creation and dissolution.

(2)

ajasraṁ tviha kṛdāṛthaṁ vikaroti janādhīpa,

avyaktabodhanāccaiva buddhyamānam vadantyapi.

(3)

— O, king! Thus for the sake of play (krīḍā) He undergoes transformation in boundless profusion; it is because He thus cognizes the guṇas of Prakṛti He is called their “tadboddhā” (kṣetrajña).

(3)

na tveva buddhyate vyaktam saguṇam tāta nirguṇam,
kadācittveva khalvetadāhurapratibuddhakam.

(4)

— O my son! The manifest saguṇa Prakṛti can never know the nirguṇa; hence, It is called “apratibuddha” - incapable of knowing or cognizing.

(4)

buddhyate yadi vāvyaktametadvai pañcaviṁśakam,
buddhyamāno bhavatyeva sangātmaka iti śrutiḥ,
anenāpratibuddheti vadantyavyaktamacyutam.

(5)

— As the twenty-fifth Puruṣa becomes the Knower (cognizer) of the constituents of Prakṛti, Prakṛti too, on account of association with Him receives that cognitive power; This is what the śruti has revealed. This is why though (in His nature) unmanifest and undecaying, the twenty-fifth tattva (“Jīva”) inhabiting Prakṛti is called apratibuddha (unawakened, unenlightened).

(5)

avyaktabodhanāccāpi buddhyamānam vadantyuta.
pañcaviṁśam mahātmānam na cāsāvapi buddhyate.

(6)

— And yet, being the cognizer (knower) of the guṇas constituting Prakṛti the twenty-fifth Puruṣa is also regarded as the "buddha" (knower); nevertheless, in that state It (the Prakṛti) lacks self-knowledge. (6)

ṣaḍviṁśaṁ vimalaṁ buddhamaprameyaṁ sanātanam
satataṁ pañcaviṁśaṁ ca caturviṁśaṁ ca budhyate. (7)

— But the twenty-sixth (tattva), Ātman, is always spotless, enlightened, illimitable and eternal; He constantly contemplates both the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth tattvas. (7)

drśyādrśye hyanugataṁ svabhāvena mahādyute,
avyakmatra tadbrahma buddhyate tāta kevalam. (8)

— O, effulgent being! In this manifested as well as unmanifested Cosmos the twenty-sixth Puruṣa is naturally immanent; it is this unmanifest (avyakta), Absolute (attributeless and eternally the same) that you should know to be Brahman. (8)

kevalam pañcaviṁśaṁca caturviṁśaṁ na paśyati
buddhyamāno yadātmānamanyo'hamiti manyate (9)

— When the twenty-fifth Puruṣa knows the Absolute, the Paramātman beyond the guṇas, and doesn't contemplate the twenty-fourth (tattva) constituted of the guṇas, then, he too becomes that absolute being, Brahman, and apprehends himself as separate and distinct from Prakṛti. (9)

tadā prakṛtimāneṣa bhavatyavyaktalocanaḥ,
buddhyate ca parāṁ buddhiṁ vimalāmamalāṁ yadā. (10)

— When he acquires the pure Intelligence (buddhi) relating to Paramātmān, then this Puruṣa dwelling in Prakṛti has his unperturbed (nirvikāra) “Knowledge-eye” opened. (10)

ṣaḍviṁśo rājaśārdūla tathā buddhatvamāvrajet,
tatastyajati so'vyaktaṁ sargapralayadharmi vai. (11)

— O, tiger among kings! then the twenty sixth (tattva), the Paramātmān is perceived and the mortal man becomes capable of wholly rejecting even the unmanifest Prakṛti. (11)

nirguṇaḥ prakṛtiṁ veda guṇayuktāmacetanām,
tataḥ kevaladharmāsau bhavatyavyaktadarśanāt. (12)

— The nirguṇa Puruṣa(first) contemplates the guṇa-constituted Prakṛti; Later, again, after experiencing his (own) true nature as the unmanifest Ātman, attains absolute Freedom (transcends the guṇas). (12)

(13) kevalena samāgamyā vimuktātmānamāpnuyāt,
etattu tattvamityāhurnistattvamajarāmaram.

— It is only after attaining the nirguṇa Brahman that he becomes liberated (vimukta) and established in his true self. It is this Puruṣa who (in association with Prakṛti) has been described as the twenty-fifth tattva, while, after experiencing the nirguṇa Brahman he is described as free from decay and death, eternal "nistattva" (beyond all tattvas). (13)

The Mahābhārata, Śānti-Parvan : The Dialogue between Yājñyavalkya and Janaka

Thus, the Dialogue between Yājñyavalkya that has been briefly related in the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad has been elaborately set forth by Vedavyāsa in several Chapters of Śānti-Parvan from Chapter 310 onwards. Parts of this Dialogue are being quoted below.

Chapter— 318

Yājñyavalkya Said :

avyaktasthaṁ paraṁ yattat prṣṭaste'haṁ narādhipa,
paraṁ guhhyamimaṁ prasnaṁ śṛṇuṣvavahito nṛpa. (1)

— Yājñyavalkya said, o King! you have asked me about the Puruṣa dwelling in the "avyakta" and the Ātman; this question concerns something that is profoundly secret ;
hence, o king! listen to me attentively. (1)

avyaktaṁ prakṛtiṁ prāhuḥ puruṣeti ca nirguṇam,
tathaiva mitraṁ puruṣaṁ varuṇaṁ prakṛtiṁ tathā.

(39)

— know the avyakta to be (female) Prakṛti and it is the nirguṇa Ātman who, becoming immanent in Prakṛti, is designated as Puruṣa; such Puruṣa is called “Mitra” and Prakṛti as “Varuṇa”.

(39)

jñānaṁ tu prakṛtiṁ prāhurjñeyaṁ niṣkalameva ca,
ajñāśca jñāśca puruṣastasmānniṣkala ucyate.

(40)

— Prakṛti is also known as “jñāna” while the Ātman is also described as “niṣkala” (devoid of parts) that is “pūrṇa” (full, whole) ; the Puruṣa on account of being both “ajñā” (ignorant) and “jñā” (all-knowing) is called “pūrṇa”.

(40)

kastapā atapāḥ proktaḥ ko'sau puruṣa ucyate,
tapāstu prakṛtiṁ prāhuratapā niṣkalaḥ smṛtaḥ.

(41)

— Who is called “tapas” and who “atapas” and what the true nature of this jīva is — I shall tell you how. It is Prakṛti that is called “tapas” and “niṣkala Brahman”, “atapas”.

(41)

tathaivāvedyamavyaktaṁ vedyāḥ puruṣa ucyate,
calācalamiti proktaṁ tayā tadapi me śṛṇu.

(42)

— In the same manner “avyaktā” Prakṛti is called “avedya” (unknowable) and the Puruṣa, “vedya” (the object of knowledge); and I shall also tell you, as you have asked, about “cala” and “acala” ; listen. (42)

calāṃ tu prakṛtiṃ prāhuḥ kāraṇaṃ kṣayasargayoḥ,
ākṣepaḥ sargayoḥ kartā niścalaḥ puruṣaḥ smṛtaḥ. (43)

— It is Prakṛti, the cause of Creation and Dissolution that is called “calā” (moving) and the Puruṣa who is the Agent of Dissolution and Creation is called “niścala” (immovable). (43)

tathaiva vedyamavyaktamavedyaḥ puruṣastathā,
ajñāvubhau dhruvau caiva akṣayau cāpyubhāvapi. (44)

ajau nityāvubhau prāhuradhyātma gatiniścayāt. (45)

— Thus, again, (in the created cosmos) it is Prakṛti that is known as “vedya” (knowledge) and owing to His invisibility the Ātman is called “avedya” (unknowable); again, (being devoid of all “vṛttis” (activities), even the activity of knowledge is absent in Him; hence) He too is “ajña” (unknowing) and so is Prakṛti. Moreover, both are constant, both are imperishable, birthless and eternal; This is what the sages who are versed in matters spiritual, are wont to say. (44) (45)

akṣayavāt prajānane ajamatrāhuravyayam,
akṣayaṁ puruṣaṁ prāhuḥ kṣayo hyasya na vidyate. (46)

— On account of His immutability in the midst of all created things that are born (called into being) He is called “aja” (birthless, uncreated) ; the Puruṣa is not subject to decay (and destruction), He is “akṣaya”.

guṇakṣayatvāt prakṛiḥ kartṛtvādakṣayaṁ budhāḥ,
eṣā te’nvīkṣikī vidyā caturthī sāmparāyikī. (47)

— creation through the guṇas having been dissolved, Prakṛti remains in Her true nature, (hence, with the dissolution of created cosmos She is not destroyed); this is why the wise characterize her as “akṣaya” (imperishable). It is this that is known as “anvīkṣikī” (relating to examination or enquiry) and the fourth, “sāmparāyikī” (relating to the future or the other world) Brahma-vidyā.

* * * * *
draṣṭavyau nityamevaitau tatpareṇāntarātmanā,
yathāsyā janmanidhanena bhavetāṁ punaḥ punaḥ. (53)

— He who contemplates both the Puruṣa who is “vedya” and the Prakṛti who is “avedya” as one with “That” (Brahman) with a mind perpetually concentrated, becomes released from the bonds of birth and death.

ajasraṁ janmanidhanaṁ cintayitvā trayīmimāṁ,
parityajya kṣayamiha akṣayaṁ dharmamāsthitaḥ. (54)

— Meditating on this three-fold Brahman renouncing the cycle of births and deaths involving decay and destruction, he attains immortality. (54)

yadānupaśyate'tyantamahanyahani kāśyapa,
tadā sa kevalībhūtaḥ śaḍviṁśamanupaśyati. (55)

— O Kāśyapa! When the sādḥaka is constantly and fully established in this meditation, then he, becoming "kevala" (absolutely pure) attains the vision of the twenty-sixth (tattva), Paramātmān. (55)

anyaśca śāśvato'vyaktastathā'nyaḥ pañcaviṁśakaḥ,
tasya dvāvanupaśyetāṁ tamekamiti sādḥavaḥ. (56)

— The eternal Unmanifest (Prakṛti) and the twenty-fifth Puruṣa — they are distinct from each other; the Spectator of both (Prakṛti and Puruṣa) is Paramātmān; the saints know this. (56)

ye naitannābhinandanti pañcaviṁśaka macyutam,
janmamṛtyubhayodyogāḥ sām̐khyāśca paramaiṣiṇaḥ. (57)

— It is not that men wholly devoted to Brahman who follow the path of Yoga or Sāṃkhya, who are perturbed by the fear of birth and death, refuse to acknowledge the unity of the twenty-fifth Puruṣa(Jīva) and the eternally unruffled Brahman.

(57)

* * * * *

abuddhyamānām prakṛtiṃ buddhyate pañcaviṃśakaḥ,
na tu buddhyati gandharva prakṛtiḥ pañcaviṃśakam.

(70)

— O, Gandharva! the twenty-fifth Puruṣa contemplates the unconscious (jaḍa) Prakṛti; but the Prakṛti does not perceive the twenty-fifth, Puruṣa.

(70)

anena pratibodhena pradhānam pravadanti tat,
sāṃkhyaygāśca tattvajñā yathā śrutinidarśanāt.

(71)

— The seers who follow the paths of Sāṃkhya and Yoga affirm in accordance with the evidence of the Śruti that Prakṛti combined with the Puruṣa becomes capable of knowledge (enlightenment) ; this is the reason why He is called "Pradhāna".

(71)

paśyamstathaiva cāpaśyan paśyatyanyaḥ sadānagha,
ṣaḍviṃśam pañcaviṃśaṅca caturviṃśaṅca paśyati.

(72)

— O, pure-hearted! the viewer Puruṣa and the unconscious Prakṛti are both permanent objects of vision by another Puruṣa; it is this Puruṣa who is called the twenty-sixth (tattva)

who contemplates the twenty-fifth Puruṣa and the Prakṛti comprising the twenty-four tattvas.

(72)

na tu paśyati paśyaṁstu yaścainamanupaśyati,
pañcaviṁśo'bhimanyeta nānyo'sti parato mama.

(73)

— But the Supreme Puruṣa who contemplates both of them, though as Spectator in reality, remains like one Unseen. The twenty-fifth Puruṣa, when he attains Him becomes one with His Essence ; he thinks then that there is nothing superior to (higher than) Him.

(73)

na caturviṁśako grāhyo manujairjñānadarśibhiḥ,
matsyaścodakamanveti pravarteta pravartanāt.

(74)

tathaiva buddhyate matsyastathaiṣo'pyanubuddhyate,
sasnehāt sahavāsācca sābhimānācca nityaśaḥ.

(75)

— The Truth-seeing sages do not accept the Prakṛti constituted of guṇas as their own Self; just as the fish seek water, and owing to their innate propensity towards it, live in it and move about merrily only when they are in the midst of it so, the twenty-fifth Puruṣa too, owing to attachment to the guṇas and on account of his co-habiting with them and consequent self-identification with them always become conscious in association with them.

(74, 75)

sa nimajjati kālasya yadaikatvaṁ na buddhyate,

unmajjati hi kālasya samatvenābhisamvṛtaḥ.

(76)

— As long as he cannot experience his oneness with Brahman so long does he remain subjected to Time; just as the fish love to remain in water in the form of the guṇas and actually lives in it; when he, on the other hand, knowing Himself as one with Paramātmān, fully resorts to Him, surrenders himself to Him, then and then only does he emerge from the unfathomable sea of guṇas.

(76)

yadā tu manyate'nyo'hamanya eṣa iti dvijaḥ,

tadā sa kevalībhutaḥ ṣaḍviṃśamanupaśyati.

(77)

— When the brāhmaṇa regards himself as separate and distinct from the world of guṇas he becomes absolutely free and knows the twenty-sixth — Paramātmān.

(77)

anyaśca rājanyavarastathānyaḥ pañcaviṃśakaḥ,

tatsthānāccānupaśyanti eka eveti sādharmaḥ.

(78)

— O the best of kings! the Paramātmān is one while the twenty-fifth Puruṣa is another— they are different; and yet the twenty-fifth Puruṣa has his very existence in the Paramātmān; hence, the saints view the twenty-fifth Jīva (Puruṣa) as one with Paramātmān.

(78)

tenaitannābhinandanti pañcaviṃśakamacyutam,

janmamṛtyubhayādbhītā yogāḥ sāmkyāśca kāśyapa,

ṣaḍviṃśamanupaśyantaḥ śucayastatparāyaṇāḥ.

(79)

— Hence, O Kāśyapa! The followers of the paths of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, struck with the fear of birth and death, do not hold that the twenty-fifth Puruṣa is imperishable; having attained purity of heart and being devoted to the twenty-sixth Puruṣa, they meditate on Him alone.

(79)

yadā sa kevalībhūtaḥ śaḍviṃśamanupaśyati,
tadā sa sarvavid vidvān na punarjanma vindati.

(80)

— When this twenty-fifth Puruṣa, established in his true self, experiences the twenty-sixth, Paramātmān, becomes omniscient and fulfilled ; he is not born again.

(80)

(6) Śrīmad-Bhagavadgītā

Śrīmad-Bhagavadgītā is a sacred text which is highly esteemed and adored by all sādḥaka sampradāyas of India; Its authenticity is universally acknowledged. Śrī Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the speaker of this Gītā. The manner in which the true nature (tattva) of Brahman, jīva and jagat has been taught in it will be briefly exemplified in what follows :

dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣaraścākṣara eva ca,
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūtastho'kṣara ucyate.

(16)

uttamaḥ puruṣastvanyāḥ paramātmetyudāhṛtaḥ,
yo lokatrayamāviśya vibhartryavyaya īśvaraḥ.

(17)

(Chapter: 15)

— Two kinds of Puruṣa, “kṣara” and “akṣara” in nature, are widely known in the world. Of these, all visible object are kṣara in nature while the “kūṭastha” (unchangeable) Puruṣa(jīva) is called akṣara (in nature). The supreme (uttama) Puruṣa is distinct from Brahman; He is designated as Paramātmān. It is He who is Īśvara ; He is eternally immutable and entering the three worlds He sustains them.

(16, 17)

mamaivāṁśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ,
manaḥ ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛtisthāni karṣati.

(7)

(Chapter 15)

— My own portion which from beginningless time has existed as the Jīva and which, in the world of living beings is widely known as “Jīva”, draws within Himself “manas” (the mind) and the five sense-organs for His enjoyment and remain in the state of Prakṛti (in the unmanifest state, at the time of suṣupti and Pralaya — deep dreamless sleep and cosmic Dissolution.)

(7)

It is this portion of Īśvara “as Jīva” which becomes manifested in the world ; but Uttama Puruṣa, who is Īśvara remains unmanifest in the phenomenal world (jagat):

na tadbhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ,
yadgatvā na nivartante taddhāma paramaṁ mama.

(6)

(Chap. 15)

— The sun, the moon or the fire (who render all other objects in the cosmos manifest) are not able to manifest Him. That, attaining which one no more returns to this world of mortals is My supreme Nature.

(6)

All other things in this world can be known easily through the senses; hence, the world is characterized as "known" (jñāta). But Parabrahman cannot be known through these instruments of perception (karaṇas). He can only be attained through strenuous performance of acts prescribed by the guru – "sādhana" and when He is known nothing else remains to be known ; hence, He is affirmed by the śāstras as "the supreme" knowable (jñeya) object. Regarding His essential nature, Śrī Bhagavān says :

jñeyam yattat pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvā mṛtamaśnute,
anādimat param brahma na sattannāsaducyate. (12)

sarvataḥ pāṇipādam tat sarvato'kṣiśiromukham,
sarvataḥ śrutimalloke sarvamāvṛtya tiṣṭhati. (13)

sarvendriyaguṇābhāsam sarvendriyavivarjitam,
asaktam sarvabhṛccaiva nirguṇam guṇabhoktr ca. (14)

(15) bahirantaśca bhūtānāmacaram carameva ca,
sūkṣmatvāttadavijñeyam dūrastham cāntike ca tat.

avibhaktamca bhūteṣu vibhaktamiva ca sthitam,
bhūtabhartṛ ca tajjñeyam grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca. (16)

jyotiṣāmapi tajjyotiṣtamasaḥ paramucyate,
jñānam jñeyam jñānagamyam hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam. (17)

(Chapter-13)

— That which is (supremely) knowable I am telling you ; knowing this, the Jīva attains immortality. He (That object to be known) is eternal, He has no beginning ; He indeed is Parabrahman. He is not an “existent” (Sat) like any object of this world; on the other hand, He cannot be described as “non-existent” (asat). His hands and feet stretch in all sides (He is in other words, omniscient and omnipotent), and exists pervading all the worlds and all places. He manifests Himself as the guṇas perceptible by all the senses (or, He manifests all the sense-organs), and yet He is devoid of all sense-organs. He is not attached to anything (that is, beyond all guṇas), and yet supports all guṇas as dependent on Him ; He is “nirguṇa” and yet Enjoyer of all guṇas. He exists within all jīvas as well as outside them; all moving and stationary objects are He Himself; moreover, He is exceedingly subtle, and so inaccessible to the intelligence (buddhi); He is distant and at the same time near. He remains undivided (as One) in all jīvas, and yet He seems to exist as divided among them. It is He who is the Sustainer, Withholder and Creator of all beings. He is the Illuminator of even luminous objects like the Sun ; He is beyond Prakṛti which is all “tamas”, He is knowledge, the Knowable and That which is attainable by Knowledge and exists as the inner Controller residing in the hearts of all.

(12 - 17)

(Chapter-13)

Here, Vedavyāsa clearly states the dual status (saguṇatva and nirguṇatva) of Brahman.

The Puruṣa who has been mentioned before as “kṣara” in nature is known as “Prakṛti” and Puruṣa who has been described as “kūtastha” and “akṣara” earlier is usually referred to as “Puruṣa”. Both this Prakṛti and this Puruṣa are beginningless (“anādi”) ; through the combination of both this Universe comprising causes and effects (kārya-kāraṇa) has been

created. The "Uttama-Puruṣa" is called Paramātmā; Prakṛti is designated as "kṣetra" and Puruṣa as "kṣetrājña".

On this matter Śrī Bhagavān says :

prakṛtīm puruṣam caiva viddhyanādi ubhāvapi,
vikārāmśca guṇāmścaiva viddhi prakṛtisambhavān. (19)

kāryakāraṇa kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtirucyate,
puruṣaḥ sukhaduḥkhānām bhoktṛtve heturucyate. (20)

puruṣaḥ prakṛtistho hi bhumkte prakṛtijān guṇān,
kāraṇam guṇasango'sya sadasad yonijanmasu. (21)

upadraṣṭānumantā ca bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ,
paramātmēti cāpyukto dehe'smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ (22)

* * * * *

yāvat samjāyate kimcit sattvaṁsthāvarajangamam,
kṣetrakṣetrjña saṁyogattadviddhi bharatarṣabhaḥ. (26)

samam sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhantam parameśvaram,
vinaśyatsvavinaśyantam yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati. (27)

(Chapter : 13)

— Know both Prakṛti and Puruṣa to be "anādi" (beginningless). Know, further, that all vikāras (evolutes) like the body and the sense-organs as well as all operations of sattva, rajas and tamas to have originated from Prakṛti. In the matter of cause, effect and active

agency know Prakṛti alone to be the cause while, in the matter of experiencing joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains it is the Puruṣa who is said to be the cause. Inhering in Prakṛti Puruṣa experiences the guṇas born of Prakṛti. It is this association with the guṇas that is the cause of His repeated births in superior and inferior forms of existence. But the Uttama Puruṣa, though dwelling in bodies, is only a (detached) Spectator; He is Gracious (giver of favours), Controller, Nourisher, Bestower of enjoyments and Omnipotent; it is this Uttama- Puruṣa who is known as "Paramātmān".

O best of the Bharatas! Whatever beings, moving or stationary, generated— know them all to originate from the union of the kṣetra and the kṣetrajña. Parameśvara, on the other hand is present equally in all beings and even after the destruction of all beings, remains everlastingly imperishable and unchangeable ; he who knows Him thus, knows the whole Truth.

This Prakṛti which has been called "Kṣetra" exists, undergoing various transformations and assuming various forms. Regarding this Śrī Bhagavān says :

mahābhūtānyahamkāro buddhiravyaktameva ca
indriyāṇi daśaikamca pañca cendriyagocarāḥ. (5)

* * * * *

etat kṣetram samāsenā savikāramudāhṛtam (6)

(Chapter-13)

— The five gross elements (earth, water, fire, air and the void), Ahamkāra, Buddhi (Mahat), Avyakta (Prakṛti), the ten sense-organs and the mind (Manas) and the five subtle elements — in all these forms the "Kṣetra" and its transformations (vikāra) are briefly described.⁵²

The “avyakta” that has been mentioned here— that is Prakṛti. It is on account of this avyakta undergoing transformations, beginning from Buddhi (Mahat-tattva) and ending in “Kṣiti” (earth) — all this Cosmic Creation is manifested, then dissolved, and manifested again; thus the cosmic processes are being manifested over and over again. But as the source (Ground) of even this unmanifest Prakṛti that is the cause of this universe characterized by origination and final destruction, the Supreme Unmanifest, eternal Brahman remains as perennially immovable and imperturbable. About this, Śrī Bhagavān says :

Sahasrayugaparyantamaharyadbrahmaṇo viduḥ,
rātrim yugasahasrāntām te'horātravido janāḥ. (17)

avyaktādvaktayaḥ sarvaḥ prabhavantyahaṛāgame,
rātryāgame pralīyante tatraivāvyakta samjñake. (18)

bhūtagrāmaḥ sa evāyaṁ bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate,
rātryāgame'vaśaḥ pārtha prabhavatyahaṛāgame. (19)

parastasmāttu bhāvo'nyo'vyaktyo'vyaktāt sanātanāḥ
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati.

(20)

avyakto'kṣara ityuktastamāhuḥ paramām gatim,
yaṁ prāpya na nivartante taddhāma paramaṁ mama. (21)
puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyastvananyayā

mentioned here particularly as constituent elements of Prakṛti in the śloka (6). Nevertheless, these are not separate tattvas. In the puruṣa associated with the kṣetra “bhoga” (enjoyment and suffering) as the consequence of “avidyā” (Ignorance) is generated ; that too Śrī Bhagavān has included in kṣetra ; this will be specifically dealt with in discussing Sāṁkhya and Yoga-sūtras.

yasyāntaḥsthāni bhūtāni yena sarvamidam tatam.

(22)

[Chapter- 8]

— The period of one thousand “yugas” constitutes one “day” of Brahmā and the same period of time (one thousand yugas) constitutes His one “night”— those who know this are the real knowers of ahorātra (day and night of Brahmā). At the advent the “day” of Brahmā, from this avyakta (as the Cause) all (moving and immobile) beings appear and at the advent of His night, in that very Prakṛti called “avyakta”, all things dissolve. O, Pārtha! all these manifest moving and immobile beings, assuming births again and again, dissolve at the advent of night (Brahmā’s), and, again, at the dawn of day (Brahmā’s) reappear in inertia (without any will of their own, passively). There exists however, another eternal “avyakta” which is superior to this “avyakta” (as its ultimate Source or Ground) Primal Cause of the entire cosmos which, even after the entire cosmos is dissolved, does not perish. He is “avyakta”, “akṣara” (remaining everlastingly the same); it is He who is described as the supreme consummation of All (He is, in other words, the ultimate Source and Ground of the whole Universe and all living beings.) On attaining Him no one has to return again (to this world). This is my My Supreme Abode (in which I remain in true Essence). O, Pārtha! He in whom, all jīvas have their being, who remains pervading the entire cosmos,— it is through single-minded “bhakti” that one can attain this Supreme Puruṣa.

The two Puruṣas whom Śrī Bhagavān characterizes at first as integral portions of the “Puruṣotama”, named kṣara and akṣara, He designates again as “Prakṛti” which too is an integral part of Him, as in the following śloka :

bhūmirāpo’nalo vāyuḥ kham mano buddhireva ca,
ahamkāra itīyam me bhinnā Prakṛtiraṣṭadhā.
apareyam itastvanyām prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām,

(4)

jīvabhūtāṃ mahabāho yayedam dhāryate jagat. (5)

etadyonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇītyupadhāraya,
aham kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayastathā, (6)

mattaḥ parataramnānyat kimcidasti dhanamjaya,
mayi sarvamidam protam sūtre maṇigaṇā iva. (7)

[Chapter :7]

— “Kṣiti”, “ap”, “tejas”, “marut” and “vyoman” (ākāśa), “manas”, “buddhi” and ahaṃkāra”— these are the eight fold Prakṛti of Mine.⁵³ O, mighty-armed! this eight-fold Prakṛti however is called “aparā” (inferior); I have another Prakṛti superior to it in the form of the “jīva” ; try to know Her. It is through the combination of these two Prakṛtis belonging to Me that all these objects and being (you should know) have been manifested. Hence, it is I who Am the place of origin and dissolution of the entire cosmos. O, Dhanamjaya! There is no one superior to Me; This entire cosmos is grounded in Me, like jewels strewn on a piece of thread.

[4, 5, 6, 7]

Nevertheless, that Divine, Uttama Puruṣa, even after creating this wonderful Universe constituted by Prakṛti and Puruṣa remains as their ultimate Ground and in His essential nature beyond them all, Śrī Bhagavān has described in the following śloka :

ye caiva sāttvika bhāvā rājasāstāmasaśca ye,
matta eveti tān viddhi na tvaham teṣu te mayi. (12)

tribhirguṇamayairbhāvairebhiḥ sarvamidam jagat,
mohitam nābhijānāti māmehbhyaḥ paramavyayam. (13)

⁵³ Here the ten sense-organs have been included in the “indriya” called “manas” ; hence these (sense-organs) have not been indicated separately. The unmanifest (avyakta) Prakṛti is invisible by nature ; so, she has not been mentioned separately, and the five subtle elements like sound, touch and so on have been included in the five gross elements (mahabhūtas). So they have not been mentioned separately.

daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā,
māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetāṁ taranti te.

(14)

[Chap : 7].

— All sāttvika, rājasika and tāmasika states that exist— know them all to have originated from Me ; all these (states) have Me as their support and have their being in Me alone ; yet, in my Essence I exist transcending all these. By these three states constituted by the guṇas this entire Universe remains deluded; hence, nobody is aware of My eternal Essence that transcends them. This Māyā of Mine which is constituted of three guṇas is extremely powerful; to surmount it is exceedingly difficult ; only those who take refuge in Me are able to reach beyond this Māyā of Mine.

That the omniscience of God, by virtue of which, notwithstanding His being the eternal spectator of the guṇas, He is not bound by them is explained in the last part of the third “Prakaraṇa” of this Chapter. In the Bhagavadgītā too Śrī Bhagavān has stated this clearly; as for instance in the following śloka :

vedāham samatītāni vartamānāni cārjuna,

bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni māntu veda na kaścana. (26)[Chap: 7].

— O, Arjuna! I am fully aware of all objects and beings manifested in the past, manifest in the present and to be manifested in the future; but no one knows Me. (26)

I am concluding this discourse on the Gītā by quoting what Śrī Bhagavān said at the end of His description of the Divine emanations in Chap.10 on being asked by Śrī mannaradeva Arjuna.

athavā vahunaitena kiṁ jñātena tavārjuna,

viṣṭabhyāhamidaṁ kṛtsnamekāṁśena sthito jagat.

[10.42]

— Or, perhaps, O, Arjuna! is there any need for you to know all My vibhūti extensively and separately? Suffice it for you to know that I remain holding this boundless cosmos by only one portion of Myself. This entire Universe is only one part of My total Being.

(D) Śānti-Parvan

A Dialogue between Brahma and Rudra.

It becomes quite clear after discussing the Dialogue between Vasiṣṭha, Yājñavalkya and Janaka in the Śānti-Parvan of the Mahābhārata and the Dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in Bhīṣma-Parvan which is known as Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā that this Universe which is constituted by the twenty-five tattvas which comprise the viewer (dr̥k) as well as the viewed (dr̥śya) is included integrally in Parabrahman and is one with It; this is His saguṇa state, manifested separately; beyond all this and as the ultimate Source (Ground) of it He exists in His true Essence in the nirguṇa state. Saguṇa and “nirguṇa”— both these states contribute to His fullness.

Towards the end of Śānti-Parvan, in Chapters 350 and 351, Śrī Bhagavān Vedavyāsa, had again revealed, through his own disciple Vaiśampāyana the nature of pure “bhakti” and “jñāna” along with the nature of Parabrahman both as saguṇa and nirguṇa very clearly in the dialogue between Brahma and Rudra ; therefore, this too is being cited below.

Chapter-350

Janamejaya Said :

bahavaḥ puruṣā brahmannutāho eka eva tu,

kohyatra puruṣaḥ śreṣṭhaḥ kā vā yonirihocyate.

(1)

— O, Brahman! is the Puruṣa one or many? Who is the best (supreme) Puruṣa? What, for that matter, is “yoni”?

(1)

Vaiśampāyana said :

bahavaḥ puruṣā loke sām̐khyayogavicāraṇe,

naitadicchanti puruṣamekaṁ kurukulodvaha.

(2)

— O, The Lord of the Kuru family! in Sām̐khya and Yoga discourses and in the world in general, many Puruṣas are mentioned; those who hold their discourses in that manner, do not acknowledge the unity of the Puruṣa.

(2)

bahūnāṁ puruṣāṇāṁca yathaikā yonirucyate,

tathā taṁ puruṣaṁ viśvaṁ vyākhyāsyāmi guṇādhikam.

(3)

namaskṛtvā ca gurave vyāsāya veditātmane,

tapoyuktāya dāntāya vandyāya paramarṣaye.

(4)

idaṁ puruṣasūktam hi sarvavedeṣu pārthiva,

ṛtaṁ satyaṁca vikhyātamṛṣisimhena cintitam.

(5)

— Just as the one Puruṣa becomes the origin of many puruṣas and the way in which that one Puruṣa as (manifested in) the cosmic Form is superior to all other puruṣas, I am going to expound it after saluting my Gurudeva the great ṛṣi Vedavyāsa who knows the Ātman, who is accomplished in ascetic austerities, with full mastery over the senses and esteemed by all. O, Great king! this Puruṣa-sūkta is, in all the Vedas, the Truth, the great Truth and particularly famous; it has been thoroughly ascertained by that greatest of ṛṣis.

(3,4,5)

utsargeṇāpavādena ṛṣibhiḥ kapilādibhiḥ,
adhyātma cintāmāśritya śāstrāṇyuktāni bhārata. (6)

— O, the son of the Bharatas! ṛṣis like Kapila, meditating on the Ātman indwelling the world have composed the śāstras according to rules governing the universal and the particulars (sāmānya and viśeṣa). (6)

samāsatastu yad vyāsaḥ puruṣaikatvamuktavān,
tat te'haṁ sampravakṣyāmi prasādādamitaujaṣaḥ. (7)

— The unity of the Puruṣa that Vyāsa has affirmed by synthesizing all these, I am going to expound fully to you through the grace of that immeasurably powerful sage. (7)

atrāpyudāharantīmamitihāsaṁ purātaṇam,
brahmaṇā sa saṁvādaṁ tryambakasya viśāmpate. (8)

— O, great king! on this subject the old men relate an ancient legend that recounts the following dialogue between the three-eyed Śiva and Brahmā. (8)

kṣīrodasya samudrasya madhye hāṭaka-saprabhaḥ,
vaijayanta iti khyātaḥ parvatapravaro nṛpa. (9)

— O, king! in the midst of the ocean called "Kṣīroda", there stands a mighty mountain called Vaijayanta, resplendent as gold. (9)

tatrādhyātmagatim deva ekākī pravacintayan,
vairājasadanānnityam vaijayantam niṣevate. (10)

— Prajāpati (Brahmā) coming from His celestial abode everyday stays there alone reflecting deeply on spiritual matters.

(10)

atha tatrāsatastasya caturvaktrasya dhīmataḥ,
lalāṭaprabhavaḥ putraḥ śiva āgād yadr̥cchayā. (11)

— One day, when the wise, four-faced Brahmā remained seated there (in yogāsana), suddenly His son Śiva, who had originated from His forehead appeared there by chance.

(11)

ākāśena mahāyogī purā trinayanaḥ prabhuḥ,
tataḥ khānnipapātāśu dharaṇīdhara-mūrdhani. (12)

— In that ancient time, Lord Trilocana (Śiva), the mahāyogin, swiftly descended from the sky and alighted on the summit of that mountain.

(12)

agrataścābhavat prīto bavande.cāpi pādayoḥ,
taṁ pādayornipatitaṁ dr̥ṣṭvā savyena pāninā. (13)

utthapayamāsa tadā prabhurekaḥ prajāpatiḥ,
uvāca cainaṁ bhagavāṁścirasyāgatamātmajam. (14)

— Pleased at heart He approached the four-faced Brahmā and prostrating at His feet saluted Him. Seeing Him (Śiva) prostrate at His feet Prajāpati, who was seated there alone, raised Him by His left hand and, addressing His son who came to Him after a long time, said.

(13, 14)

Brahmā Said :

svāgataṁte mahāvāho diṣṭyā prāpto'si me'ntikam,
kaccitte kuśalam̐ putra svādhyāyatapasoh sadā.

(15)

— O, Mighty-armed! You are welcome. It is through good luck that I see you ; are your study of the Vedas and tapasyā (ascetic austerities) going on well?

(15)

nityamugratapāstvam̐ hi tataḥ pr̥cchāmi te punaḥ.

(16)

— You constantly practise severe austerities; that is why I am asking you this repeatedly.

(16)

Rudra (Śiva) said :

tvatprasādena bhagavan svādhyāyatapasormama,
kuśalm̐ cāvyayam̐ caiva sarvasya jagatastvatha.

(17)

— O, Bhagavan! through your Grace it is all well with My svādhyāya (study of the Vedas) and tapasyā (ascetic austerities) and with the state of the whole world.

(17)

ciradr̥ṣṭo hi bhagavān vairājasadane mayā,

tato'ham parvataṁ prāptastvimaṁ tvatpādasevitam. (18)

— O, Bhagavan! It is long since I saw you in your celestial abode; this is the first time since then that I see you again upon this mountain hallowed by your feet. (18)

kautūhalaṁ cāpi hi me ekāntagamanena te,
naitat kāraṇamalpaṁ hi bhaviṣyati pitāmaha. (19)

— However, I feel great curiosity as to the cause of your retiring to such a solitary place. O, Grandfather of all the worlds! The cause, it seems to me, cannot be a trivial one. (19)

kinnu tat sadanaṁ śreṣṭhaṁ kṣutpipāsāvivarjitam,
surāsurairadhyuṣitamṛṣibhiścāmitaprabhaiḥ. (20)

gandharvairapsorobhiśca satataṁ sannīṣevitam,
utsrjyemaṁgirivaramekākī prāptavānasi. (21)

— leaving that celestial abode of yours which is the highest, free from hunger and thirst, inhabited by Gods, Demons, Gandharvas and Apsarās, why have come to this great mountain alone? (20,21)

Brahmā Said :

vaijayanto girivaraḥ satataṁ sevyate mayā,
atraikāgreṇa manasā puruṣaścintyate virāt. (22)

— I come to this great mountain everyday ; here, I reflect on the “Virāt” (vast, all-pervading) Puruṣa with a concentrated mind.

(22)

Rudra (Śiva) said :

bahavaḥ puruṣā brahmaṁstvayā sṛṣṭāḥ svayambhuvā,
sṛjyante cāpare brahman sa caikaḥ puruṣo virāt.

(23)

kohyasau cintyate brahmaṁstvayaikaḥ puruṣottamaḥ,
etanme saṁśayaṁ brūhi mahat kautūhalaṁ hi me.

(24)

— O, Brahman! You are svayambhu! (self-born); it is you who has created many puruṣas and many others are being created; but, that One, all-pervading (Virāt) Puruṣa that you too are reflecting on— who is that “Puruṣottama”? Doubts have arisen in my mind regarding this; I feel great curiosity to know this.

(23, 24)

Brahmā said :

banavaḥ puruṣāḥ putra tvayā ye samudāhṛtāḥ,
evametadatikrāntaṁ draṣṭavyaṁ naivamityapi.

(25)

— O, my son! beyond the many puruṣas you have mentioned, there is one Puruṣa; He is not seen by anybody.

(25)

ādhārantu pravakṣyāmi ekasya puruṣasya te,
bahūnāṁ puruṣāṇāṁ sa yathaikā yonirucyate.

(26)

— Just as the Source of the many puruṣas mentioned by you is one Puruṣa, so the Puruṣa I meditate on is the Source of even that Puruṣa. (26)

tathā taṁ puruṣaṁ viśvaṁ paramaṁ sumahattamaṁ,
nirguṇaṁ nirguṇībhūtvā praviśanti sanātanaṁ. (27)

— Just as many puruṣas spring from one Puruṣa so, the Puruṣa I have mentioned is cosmic in Form, Supreme and greater than the Great; that perennial Puruṣa is beyond the guṇas; all other puruṣas after attaining the nirguṇa state merge in Him. (27)

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Brahmā said :

śṛṇu putra yathā hyeṣa puruṣaḥ śāśvato'vyayaḥ,
akṣayaścāprameyaśca sarvagaśca nirucyate. (1)

— O, my son! I am telling you about the nature of that Eternal (without beginning and end, abiding), Avyaya (without any transformation), Akṣaya (imperishable), Aprameya (beyond speech and mind) and Omnipresent; listen. (1)

na sa śakyastvayā draṣṭuṁ mayānyairvāpi sattama,
saguṇainirguṇairviśvo jñānadśṛyo hyasau smṛtaḥ. (2)

— O the greatest among the virtuous! You, I or any other person, learned or ignorant is not able to see Him. He is All; He is described (by the sages) as attainable only by pure knowledge. (2)

aśarīraḥ śarīreṣu sarveṣu nivaśatyasau,
vasannapi śarīreṣu na sa lipyati karmabhiḥ.

(3)

— Though without a body Himself, He dwells in all bodies; but though dwelling in bodies He is not involved in bodily activities.

(3)

mamāntarātmā tava ca ye cānye dehasamjñitāḥ,
sarveśāṁ sākṣībhūto'sau na grāhyaḥ kenacit kvacit.

(4)

— He is my Soul, He is the soul (Antarātman) of you and all other embodied beings ; He is the witness of all beings, and sees everything ; but no one is ever able to see Him.

(4)

viśvamūrdhā viśvabhujo viśvapādākṣināsikaḥ,
ekaścarati kṣetreṣu svairacārī yathāsukham.

(5)

— He has all heads as His, all arms and legs, all eyes and noses; though He is one, He moves about in many kṣetras (fields) as He wills.

(5)

kṣetrāṇi hi śarīrāṇi bījaṁ cāpi śubhāśubham,
tāni vetti sa yogātma tataḥ kṣetrajña ucyate.

(6)

— being connected with bodies and the seeds of good and evil, He knows all these ;
hence, He is called Kṣetrajña.

(6)

nāgatiranagatistasya jñeyā bhūteṣu kenacit,
sāṁkhyena vidhinā caiva yogena ca yathākramam.

(7)

— No one can know, through the laws of Sāṁkhya and Yoga, His comings and goings within this world of beings and objects.

(7)

cintayāmi gatim cāsyā na gatim vedmi cottarām,
yathājñānam tu vakṣyāmi puruṣam tu sanātanam.

(8)

— It is about the status (nature) of Him that I meditate; but even I have not been able fully to know His Supreme status. I shall tell you however as far as I have been able to know about that eternal Puruṣa.

(8)

tasyaikatvaṁ mahattvaṁ ca sa caikaḥ puruṣaḥ smṛtaḥ,
mahāpuruṣaśabdam sa vibhartye ka sanātana.

(9)

— That Puruṣa is One (non-dual-advaita) and Great; the Śruti itself has characterized Him as Advaita ; He is denoted by the term “Mahāpuruṣa” ; He is eternal and, though He is One, He is holding (sustaining) the cosmos.

(9)

eko hutaśo bahudhā samiddhate,
ekaḥ sūryastapaso yonirekā.
eko vāyurbahudhā vāti loke,
mahodadhiścambhasā yonirekaḥ.
puruṣaścaiko nirguṇo viśvarūpa-

staṁ nirguṇaṁ puruṣaṁ cāviśanti.

(10)

— Just as the one Fire is manifested in many forms, the one Sun is the sole origin of all kinds of heat, the one “Vāyu” (air) blows in many forms and the sea is the only source of all waters ; so, the Puruṣa too is one and devoid of all guṇas (nirguṇa) and yet has assumed the entire Cosmic Form ; and at the end, all beings and objects merge in that “nirguṇa” Puruṣa.

(10)

hitvā guṇamayam sarvaṁ karma hitvā śubhāśubham,
ubhe satyānrte tyaktvā evaṁ bhavati nirguṇaḥ.

(11)

— Renouncing everything that is constituted of guṇas, abandoning all karmas, good or evil, after rejecting both the true and the false (That is, by conceiving that all things in this world are no other than Brahman) — it is thus that the jīva attains the “nirguṇa” state.

(11)

acintyaṁ cāpi taṁ jñātvā bhāvasūkṣmaṁ catuṣṭayam,
vicared yo'samunnaddhaḥ sa gacchet puruṣaṁ śubham.

(12)

— That superior, spiritually elevated person lives on after knowing that inconceivable Puruṣa and His four subtle status (viśva, taijasa, prājña, turīya), attains that Supreme Puruṣa.

(12)

evaṁ hi paramātmānaṁ kecidicchanti paṇḍitāḥ,
ekātmānaṁ tathātmānamapare jñānacintakāḥ .

(13)

— Some sages (those who follow the path of Bhakti), adopting this sādhana of meditation an Brahman in these four states like viśva, taijasa and so on and also as beyond them

(that is both as sarguṇa and nirguṇa), attain the Paramātmā; while, other followers of the path of knowledge (jñānayogins) attain Him through meditating on the identity of the jīvātman with Brahman. (13)

tatra yaḥ paramātmā hi sa nityam nirguṇaḥ smṛtaḥ,
sa hi nārāyaṇo jñeyaḥ sarvātmā puruṣo hi saḥ. (14)

— Among them, the Paramātmā is eternally “devoid of attributes” (nirguṇa); know Him to be the Ātman of all, as “Nārāyaṇa.” (14)

na lipyate phalaiścāpi padmapatramivāmbhasā,
karmātmā tvaparo yo'sau mokṣabandhaiḥ sa yujyate. (15)

— Just as water never adheres to lotus leaves so, He is not affected by the fruits of actions; The other, on the other hand, who is jīva becomes entangled in karma ; hence, he is subject to the states of release (mokṣa) and bondage (bandha). (15)

sa saptadaśakenāpi rāśina yujyate ca saḥ,
evam bahuvidhaḥ proktaḥ puruṣaste yathākramam. (16)

— In this latter state He becomes combined with the seventeen “rāśis” (that is with the subtle body which is constituted by the eleven sense-organs, including “manas”, the five subtle elements and “Ahaṁkāra”). Thus I have explained to you how the Puruṣa assumes diverse forms (states). (16)

yattat kṛtsnamlokatantrasya dhāma,
vedyaṁ param bodhaniyaḥ sa boddhā;
mantā mantavyaṁ prāśita prāśaniyam,
ghrātā ghreyaṁ sparśitā sparśaniyam. (17)

— He, who is the Source of all the worlds — He is the supreme Object of Knowledge ; He is the percept as well as the percipient ; He is the thinker and at the same time, the object of thought ; He is the enjoyer as well as the enjoyable object ; it is He who smells and at the same time is the object smelt; He again, is both the percipient of tactual sensation and the tangible object. (17)

draṣṭā draṣṭavyam śrāvitā śrāvaṇīyam
jñātā jñeyam saṁguṇam nirguṇamca,
yadvai proktaṁ tāta samyak pradhānam
nityam caitacchāśvataṁ cāvyayaṁca.. (18)

— He is the viewer as well as the object viewed; He is the hearer and also what is heard ; He is the knower and at the same time the object to be known; He is “saṁguṇa” and yet “nirguṇa”; that which is known as “Pradhāna” (avyakta) and eternal is one with this perennial, changeless Paramātmā. (18)

yadvai sūte dhāturādyam vidhānam
tadvai viprāḥ pravādante'niruddham,
yadvai loke vaidikaṁ karma sādhu,
āśīryuktaṁtaddhi tasyaiva bhāvyam. (19)

— He who is the cosmic creator's primal creation Hiraṇyagarbha — He and Aniruddha (the Divine as Cosmic Form) the brāhmaṇas declare as one; whatever propitious, virtuous and Vedic karma is performed in the world— you should look upon this as His work. (19)

devāḥ sarve munayaḥ sādhuśāntā-

staṁ prāgvaṁśe yajñabhāgaṁ bhajante,
ahaṁ brahmā ādya īśaḥ prajānām,
tasmājjātaśtvaṁca mattaḥ prasūtaḥ.

(20)

— All the gods, the sages, the saints and the serene holy men adore Him by first offering Him sacrificial oblations; I, who am the primal Lord of all created beings have sprung from Him ; while you, Rudra (Śiva), have emanated from Me. (20)

matto jagajjangaṁsthāvaraṁ ca
sarve vedāḥ sarahasyā hi putra. (21)

— O, my son! from Me, this world comprising all moving and stationary beings and all the Vedas with their esoteric messages have been produced. (21)

casturbibhaktaḥ puruṣaḥ sa krīḍati yathecchati
evamśa bhagavān svena jñānena pratibodhitaḥ. (22)

— That supreme Person dividing Himself thus in four⁵⁴ aspects plays at His will. If one thus knows that Divine as his very self, He becomes known. (22)

ettatte kathitaṁ putra yathāvadanupṛcchataḥ,
sāṁkhyajñāne tathā yoge yathāvadanuvarṇitaṁ. (23)

⁵⁴ Viśva, Taijasa, Prājña, Turiya (Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Saṁkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva)

— O, my son! that which you had asked about I have told you in an exact manner, as it has been set forth in Sāṃkhya Philosophy and Bhaktiśāstra (scriptures inculcating Bhakti).

(23)

Conclusion

Thus the “nirguṇatva” and “saguṇatva” of Brahman have been affirmed in Śruti, Smṛti and all other śāstras. As nirguṇa Brahman is wholly non-dual (Purnādvaita), the entire Universe, comprising moving as well as non-moving objects is established in His Essence ; in that state, no guṇas or jīvas exist as separate manifestations, all these are incorporated in The Being of Brahman; in that state there is no manifestation of any Power, be it “dr̥k” (viewer) or “dṛśya” (viewed) ; since, comprising within Himself the entire cosmos Brahman alone exists; who will, then be the “viewer” and who the “viewed”? Nevertheless, this Brahman, again, contemplates Himself in infinitely multiple forms, separately. This is what can be described as His omnipotence (the saguṇa state). At the first stage of this saguṇa state the dr̥k-śakti appears as a predisposition towards contemplation of separate particulars. This dr̥k-śakti is called “Puruṣa”. This predisposition towards manifestation in infinite plurality that exists in Him— this is the seed of the manifested cosmos called “Prakṛti”. When this “Prakṛti” (predisposition) is regarded as “Pradhāna” (chief, principal) the dr̥k-śakti is seen only as a concomitant of it, Prakṛti is designated as “Pradhāna”; when, on the other hand, the dr̥k-śakti is regarded as the main thing (Pradhāna) and this predisposition (towards Creation) is seen as only an intrinsic element in it, it is called “Puruṣa”. It is this Puruṣa who is designated as “saguṇa” Brahman”. Referring to that state in which this predisposition (towards Creation) does not exist, He is characterized as only “nirguṇa Brahman” and as “eternally free” (nitya-mukta) and so on.

From this Puruṣa, combined with Prakṛti the world that is constituted of guṇas, appears ; hence, in every part of this world, “dr̥k-śakti” (Puruṣa) is inherent as a whole and also as separate and particular. That in every part the Puruṣa is inherent as an individual (particular) is easily comprehensible. It is because of this inherence of Jīva-akti in the bodies of all living creatures we see everyone of them as “Jīva”. That the Jīva-śakti, however, is also present as a whole, inherent in the world is not so easily understandable. Therefore at the cost of repetition I shall try to glorify this (point) with the help of illustration cited in the previous Quarter. I for instance, am an embodied Jīva ; pervading all the parts of this body I exist as its knower (percipient), identifying myself mentally with it. A little examination would however reveal that this body of mine has been constituted by the combined bodies of innumerable tiny jīvas; every drop of semen, of blood, every tiny particle of flesh, bone and marrow exist as conglomerates of innumerable cellular organisms; this has been described in the previous Quarter. An examination of the matter reveals that these minute living organisms (jīvas) remain conscious through my consciousness, alive through my life and my death brings about the death of all of them. Just as the Jīva consciousness inheres as a totality in the body as a whole is a person (Puruṣa) like “I” (for instance) ; on the other hand, in every part of this body also Jīva-consciousness is present separately; for this reason, every tiny fragment of this body too is a separate and distinct jīva. Again, in the tiny bodies of these minute jīvas there exist innumerable jīvas that are even smaller ; we are able now to know this matter to some extent through the microscope. In the same manner, this earth peopled by many human races, animals, birds, insects and flies, and plants is a vast Jīva. For the tiny organisms living in my blood stream as their habitat, my body is a huge material object like the earth; similarly, in comparison with the earth, the terrestrial surface is the habitat of small jīvas like ourselves ; hence, we feel the earth as a (unconscious) material object. Nevertheless,

on account of the inherence of the Jīva- śakti in it , the earth too is a vast Jīva. Thus, again, the earth in its turn, exists as a tiny fragment of the solar system comprising various planets and other planetary bodies. The Puruṣa indwelling the entire solar sphere (Sūrya-maṇḍala) comprising all heavenly bodies, we usually characterize as the “Virāṭ Puruṣa”. In like manner, again, this “Virāṭ ” too is a part of the vaster “Virāṭ” called “Śiśumāra” which comprises the stellar sphere which includes the star Dhruva (Polestar). Through an examination of this kind, the two states, the “whole” and its part as a particular individual are rendered intelligible. In comparison with a particular individual jīva existing at a particular stage of being, the jīva indwelling the totality of such individual jīvas is conceived as God (Īśvara). Through an examination of this kind (from the point of view of common sense) in successive upper stages the jīva too receives the appellation of “Īśvara”.

Thus, though saṁyama Brahman is one, drk-śakti being immanent in every part constituted by wholes made up of diverse composites of guṇas, Īśvara, is infinite as the Totality of Existence while the jīva too is infinite in number according to diversity of jīvas. The liberation of the jīva is achieved only when the realization of oneness with Parabrahman occurs. The knowledge of the separateness of the things around him that the jīva has is incomplete knowledge; it is therefore, an error or delusion; with the rise of the knowledge of the non-dualism of all existence (Advaita-jñāna) the jagat constituted of guṇas is seen (experienced) as Brahman. This is the real essence of Śaṅkarācārya's example of mistaking a rope for a snake in a dark place. From Seeing a rope in a dark place arises the erroneous impression that it is a snake; but when the nature of the object seen is revealed by light this error of thinking a rope to be a snake is dissipated and the perception of its true nature of rope occurs. In an analogous manner, in the incomplete knowledge caused by darkness objects appear to be separately existing; but when the light of non-dualistic knowledge dawns all these (objects and beings) are felt to be one

with Brahman and not as separately existing disparate entities. The object seen in darkness is not altogether false, mistaking it for a snake—that is the error ; as soon as its real character as a snake is revealed this error is dispelled. In the same way, the visible world is not illusory ; what is actually erroneous is the notion that it is in its true nature an entity that subsists as separate and distinct from Brahman; at the rise of non-dualistic knowledge this incomplete knowledge is dispelled; the Brahman-nature of the visible world is then fully known. Thus the example cited by Śrī Śaṁkarācārya becomes significant. It is with the help of this very example that Śrī Bhagavān Kapiladeva, in one of his Sāṁkhya-sūtras has explained the nature of liberation (mukti). Indeed, Śaṁkarācārya's statement that neither the Brahman-nature of "Māyā" nor Her difference from Brahman-nature is explicable by the discursive intellect between this view of his and the notion of the dual status of Brahman that has been established here, the distinction is indeed very subtle and insignificant ; this has been pointed out before ; there is not much harm therefore in ignoring this. Even Śaṁkara Svāmī has admitted in the daily conduct of life in society, the prevailing sense of the plurality of jīvas and the reality of the created world. Jñāna-yoga which consists in conceiving the jīva and Brahman as one (non-different) is the real subject-matter of the "Śārīraka Bhāṣya" (of Śaṁkarācārya). "Rejecting the phenomenal world as illusory and thinking oneself as no other than Brahman Himself" ; there is, on the other hand, the view that "the world is not false, it is only made of guṇas, the Puruṣa is distinct from it— ascertaining this through judgement regarding oneself as beyond the guṇas, all pervasive and Ātman as his Essence"— between these two views there is no real difference. In both these (spiritual) processes the true essence of the teaching consists in conceiving jīva-element who is the viewer as one with the supreme Person or Paramātman who is beyond the guṇas. Sāṁkhya-yoga is really what is known as Jñāna-yoga ; this will be expounded in the following Quarter ; hence, Śaṁkara Svāmī should, as

a matter of fact, be looked upon as a follower the Sāṃkhya way. The Vedānta-sūtra written by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa is really meant for the yogins who follow the path of Bhakti; this will be specifically demonstrated later on. Nevertheless, both the path of Knowledge (Jñāna-mārga) and the path of Bhakti (bhakti-mārga) lead to mokṣa; so far as the ultimate result is concerned, there is no difference at all. There is a difference in methods only at the stage of sādhana. This is the reason why Śrī Bhagavān says in Chapter V in the Gītā :

sāṃkhyayogau⁵⁵ prthagbālā pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ,
ekamapyāsthitaḥ samyagubhayorvindate phalam. (4)

yat sāṃkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānam tad yogairapi gamyate,
ekaṃ sāṃkhyamca yogamca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati. (5)

— Men who are ignorant as a mere boy describe “Sāṃkhya” and “Yoga” as different ; nevertheless, the wise never do so ; for, if one fully adopts any one of these two, one gets the fruits of both. (4)

— The goal that one finally attains (mokṣa) by taking to the path of knowledge of the Sāṃkhya (Philosophy), is attained also through “Yoga”; he who can know Sāṃkhya Jñāna and Yoga as one and the same— his view is the true one. (5)

⁵⁵ Here the term “Yoga” has to be understood in the sense of pure “Karmayoga” which consists in the offering of all karma to Brahman— which is included in Bhakti-yoga. In the same Chapter V, śloka 10, the statement— “Brahmanyādhāya karmāṇi sangamtyaktvā karoti yaḥ” (He who perform all actions, offering them to Brahman, without attachment) — this is the kind “Bhakti-yoga” which has been clearly indicated by the term “yoga” in śloka 4.

Here ends the 4th Quarter of the 2nd Chapter entitled "the Pramāṇas (evidences) of Brahmanvidyā".

Here ends the Second Chapter entitled "Vaidika Brahmanvidyā".

Om Tat Sat

Chapter—III

I Quarter

Determination of a person's
capacity for and competence in (adhikāra)
a particular Darśana (Philosophy).

Brahmanvidyā has been set forth with evidences from the śāstras. In the various Darśanas (schools of Indian Philosophy) it is this Brahmanvidyā which has been expounded with arguments and scriptural and other evidence. Nevertheless, it has been said earlier that the ācārya ṛṣis have diversified their teachings in accordance with the differences in the competence of and the nature of the questions asked by the pupils (śiṣyas). As boys of tender age began, after being initiated, to live with the ācārya to receive "vidyā" (spiritual knowledge) the ācāryas would first make them learn the Vedas and to recite and sing them ; after the Vedas were learnt by heart, they would explain to the pupils their meaning and in order that the latter may perform the prescribed Vedic rituals and sacrifices thoroughly well, the pupils would be taught finally the methods and modes of thought expounded in the "Pūrva-mīmāṃsā" Darśana. But it has already been

pointed out that it is not the ultimate object of the Vedas to generate an abiding devotion to the "Karmakāṇḍa" of the Vedas ; the chief aim of the Vedas is to render human beings eager for salvation (mumukṣu). Hence, the ācāryas, in order to instil into their pupils this eagerness for mokṣa were particularly careful, while teaching the Vedas, to see that they begin to think about the true nature of the jīva and the jagat, each according to his own "adhikāra" (capacity and competence).

For intelligent boys at the initial stage it is the "Vaiśeṣika" Darśana that is most suitable for study. In order that in the minds of the boys, the clear conception of the nature of the physical world is developed, the matter has been taught in the Vaiśeṣika Darśana in a very simple manner. The physical objects in this phenomenal world are infinite in number; by dividing them in the three categories of change, namely, dravya (substance), guṇa (quality) and karma (actions) they have been taught in their three aspects— universal (sāmānya), particular (viśeṣa) and collective (samaveta). By learning to conceive the infinite number of substances in this world, the mind is enlarged. When the mind is enlarged, gradually, one feels a keen interest to know the true nature of these substances. Subsequently when the conceptual power of the mind is somewhat increased one should study the "Nyāya" Darśana by Maharṣi Gotama in order to acquire a thorough knowledge of Logic. By this (study) the intellect becomes so refined that one becomes fully capable then, of grasping even the most subtle matters. The main purpose of the "Gotama-sūtra" is to teach the nature of "pramāṇa" (The means of acquiring certain knowledge "prama") and its various forms. Moreover, to prevent the intellect from being misled, Maharṣi Gotama, by disclosing the nature of various fallacies, has specifically mentioned in the Nyāya - Darśana the methods by which they can be avoided. Besides, by establishing the authority of the Vedas and proclaiming the supreme excellence of mokṣa, the deeply compassionate Maharṣi, has been careful that the mind of the disciple is not driven

towards pernicious atheism and becomes filled with "vairāgya" (non-attachment) for the attainment of mokṣa. Nowadays, the study of the "Gotama-sūtra" is not in vogue in many places. Taking up the six primary substances like "dravya" "guṇa" and so on that have been explained in the Vaiśeṣika -Darśana at a preliminary stage of "śikṣā" (Education) and with the help of the exposition of the pramāṇa in the Gotama-sūtra, "the new school of Nyāya" (Navya-Nyāya), which seeks to establish the "atoms" (paramāṇu) as the primal cause, has evolved. This is what is familiar now as the Vaiśeṣika doctrine of the "cosmic cause" (Jagat-kāraṇa). At present, it is the study of this "Navya-Nyāya" which is prevalent in Bengal. From ancient times, a certain class of sages had been disseminating such a doctrine. It is this (kind of Nyāya) that has been refuted in Vedānta Darśana as well as Sāṃkhya Darśana. The existence of differences in the views held by the ṛṣis not proved by this.

After this, when the methods of discourse are thoroughly mastered, the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā Darśana is to be studied. Reading of this Darśana makes one thoroughly familiar with the entire Vedic Karmakāṇḍa. In ancient times it was after finishing the study of this Pūrva-mīmāṃsā Darśana the majority of the students would, after convocation, married and assume the state of the house-holder (Gṛhasthāśrama).

There are doubtless differences between some of the teachings of the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā and those of the Vaiśeṣika and the Nyāya; "śabda" for instance, has been described as transitory in the Vaiśeṣika-Darśana; in the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā Darśana on the other hand, it has been affirmed as eternal. Nevertheless, there are in reality, no differences of views; this will be demonstrated when these systems of Philosophy will be expounded. All that one should remember at this point is, that with the progressive refinement of the intelligence of the pupil, a change (for the better) in his capacity and competence (adhikāra) is inevitable. To explain the natural phenomena of day and night

and so on the boys are told at first that heavenly bodies like the Sun are daily revolving round the earth; nevertheless, with the advance in age, when their intellectual faculty is developed, they are to be taught that this explanation is erroneous and that it is the earth which is perpetually revolving round the Sun. Just as in this, it is wrong to imagine the existence of differences of opinion among the teachers so, it is wrong to suppose the existence of differences of views among the philosophers. These systems of Indian Philosophy (Darśanas) will be later discussed separately and at length; hence, no extensive discussion on this subject is done here.

It has been stated earlier that after the completion of the study of the "Mīmāṃsā Darśana" the majority of the pupils used to return home from the "Gurugṛha" (the home of the Guru). Many among them however also developed a capacity for imbibing an even higher level of study; through "Brahmacarya" (holy living) and the study of the Vedas along with the afore-mentioned "Darśanas" and other śāstras, the intelligence of some among them would become so highly refined that some, being extremely averse to the world (saṃsāra) acquired the competence to pursue the study of the Sāṃkhya Darśana and the spiritual path of knowledge of the Sāṃkhya; some others, on the other hand, being competent to pursue the study of Vedānta-Darśana and the acquisition of the complete Brahma-vidyā that is set forth in the Vedānta, would resort to that sādhana (Vedantic). Both these types of pupils are regarded as "mumukṣu". According to their respective mental attitudes and temperaments the brahmavādin ācāryas would teach them (the pupils) the Sāṃkhya or the Vedānta way of knowledge. The methods of teachings of these two Darśanas are extremely different, hence, when one speaks of philosophical differences, one usually has in mind the difference between Sāṃkhya and Vedānta. Hence, the difference in the competence and capacity between adherence of these two

Darśanas and their methods of teaching will be specifically dealt with in the remaining part of this Quarter.

In the 2nd Quarter of the 2nd Chapter of this book those persons who, in determining the “adhikāra”, have been characterized as mumukṣu (desirous of salvation) are really capable of receiving Brahma-vidyā. They are mainly divided into two categories : the “jñānamārgins” (followers of the path of jñāna—knowledge) and the “bhaktimārgins” (followers of the path of bhakti—devotion). The jñānamārgins have competence in “jñānamārga” while the bhaktimārgins are endowed with the capacity for “bhaktimārga”. Those who, finding the saṁsāra full of sorrows and sufferings, have become extremely averse to it and are characterized by an analytical intelligence and an extremely subtle spiritual perception and are capable of discriminating between the “Self” and the “not-Self”—these are the persons who have a natural capacity and competence (adhikāra) for “jñāna-yoga”. Those on the other hand, whose intelligence is subtle and yet synthetic; who are therefore, naturally inclined to unity in diversity and who, through listening to the various blessed attributes of the Divine have become drawn to Him and adore Him—they are the persons who have a natural competence for Bhaktiyoga. Those disciples who are adhikārins, in the manner just described, of Jñānayoga are fit to imbibe the teachings of the Sāṁkhya Philosophy. Bhagavān Kapiladeva, first taught this knowledge of the Sāṁkhya to Maharṣi Āsuri; Maharṣi Āsuri, on his part taught this to his disciple ācārya Pañcaśikha. The Sāṁkhya-sūtras composed by Kapila, enlarged by a continuous line of disciples have come to be known as “Sāṁkhya-Pravacana sūtra”. Later, Īśvara Kṛṣṇa acquiring this knowledge (of the Sāṁkhya), by eliminating the narrative elements and the parts that deal with examinations of other views in Sāṁkhya-Pravacana-sūtra, and thus retaining only the principal sūtras conveyed them tersely in the form of a “Kārikā” (a concise statement of a philosophical view in verse) in the book entitled “Sāṁkhya-Kārikā”.

Ever since then, it was the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā that became increasingly prevalent while the original Sāṃkhya-sūtras became more and more scarce. It was Aniruddha Bhaṭṭa who, in modern times, first published these sūtras with his own commentary on them. Later, the celebrated scholar Vijñāna-bhikṣu explaining them at length in his own commentary spread it in the society of the learned. Apart from these, there exists another extremely succinct text containing only 22 sūtras entitled "Tattva-samāsa" ; this too is an authentic text of the Sāṃkhya School of thought. At the outset, in the first 6 sūtras of the Sāṃkhya-Pravacana-sūtra", Śrī Bhagavān Kapiladeva has indicated the subject-matter of his teachings and the required fitness of the recipients of this knowledge. This is how it runs :

1) atha trividhaduḥkhātyantanivṛttiratyantapuruṣārthaḥ.

Here, the term "atha" denotes "adhikāra". The total cessation of the three kinds of distresses (duḥkha) which alone constitutes mokṣa is the summum bonum (parama puruṣārtha) of man. This is the subject of the book called "Sāṃkhyapravacana-sūtra". Through the vedic rites like "yāgas" and "yajñas" (ritual sacrifices) mentioned in the Karma-kāṇḍa of the Vedas, the final release from sorrows and sufferings cannot be achieved; through these, therefore, the highest good of man, "mokṣa", too, is not attained; this will be demonstrated now :

2) na drṣṭāt tatsiddhirnivṛtterapyanuṣṭīdarśanāt.

Through "seen" (that is, mentioned in the Karma-kāṇḍa of the Vedas and, thus known) methods the ultimate cessation from "duḥkha" (sorrows and sufferings) does not occur ;

for, through these methods, despite the cessation of (present) distress, such distress is nevertheless seen to recur.

3) prātyahikakṣutpratikāraṇāt tatpratikāraceṣṭanāt puruṣārthatvam.

It is no doubt true that through efforts made, by means of visible actions prescribed by the Vedas to get rid of evil and suffering too, the highest good of man (puruṣārtha) is achieved; but that is (ephemeral) like the puruṣārtha that is achieved by our daily efforts to satisfy hunger.

On the other hand, it may be objected that the fruits of Vedic karmas cannot be comparable to our daily satisfaction of hunger; for, it has been stated that through the performance of vedic rites like “yāga-yajña”, one can also attain results like the enjoyment of celestial felicity. Hence, there can never be a comparison between the efforts to satisfy hunger with karmas enjoined by the Vedas. Replying to this objection the Sūtrakāra says :

4) sarvāsambhavāt sambhavepyatyantāsambhavāt heyaḥ pramāṇakuśalaḥ.

The fruits of Vedic karmas, it is true, are indeed like this; nevertheless, through them the ending of all kinds of sorrows and sufferings is not possible and (through the attainment of celestial realms like Brahmaloḥka) even if it is possible there is no possibility of final release from them (because even from these celestial realms as it has been stated in the śāstras, one may have to return to this world at the exhaustion of accumulated merits — “puṇya”, and return to this world always entails suffering ; hence, it does not follow that as a result of the attainment of these celestial realms, evil and suffering is ended once and for all). This is why those who have certain knowledge (regarding these matters) do not recognize

“laukika” (mundane) and “vaidika” karmas as the cause of definitive cessation of evil and suffering (and so, renouncing these, they follow the path of “mokṣa”). In particular :

5) utkarṣādapi mokṣasya sarvotkarṣaśruteḥ.

(In that same Śruti in which Karma-kāṇḍa has been included) the supreme excellence of “mukti” (that is the superiority of mokṣa over all kinds of fruits mentioned in the Karma-kāṇḍa of the vedas) has been established; hence, on account of the superiority of mokṣa (to those fruits of vedic acts) means to achieve this must be sought after.

6) aviśeṣaścobhayoḥ.

Hence, so far as the definitive ending of evil and suffering is concerned, there is no essential difference between vedic karmas and mundane activities like the daily efforts to satisfy hunger.

Īśvarakṛṣṇācārya combining these 6 sūtras, has expressed the gist of them in the first “kārikā” of his own Sāṃkhya kārikā as follows :

duḥkhatrayābhighātājijñāsā tadabhighātake hetau,

drṣṭe sāpārthācennaikāntātyantato'bhāvāt.

(1)

All jīvas are afflicted by the onslaught of the three kinds of duḥkha; hence, the “jijñāsā” (desire to know) regarding the means of ending it. Nevertheless, such means (like vedic ritual acts and medicine) being ascertained and known “jijñāsā” (regarding the means of ending duḥkha, again) is needless; this objection, if raised, is not valid; since, through these visible means the definitive ending of all kinds of duḥkha is not possible.

While examining these sūtras it becomes clear that at the very beginning of the text, Bhagavān Kapiladeva states that in this book he will reveal the means of final release from distress and sufferings (duḥkha) mentioned in the vedic Karma-kāṇḍa as the means of fulfilment of desires cannot bring about the total and ultimate cessation of suffering and distress. From these statements, it is evident that the disciple to whom Kapiladeva is about to teach the means of deliverance from suffering and distress, is one who, knowing this saṁsāra to be full of misery and becoming sceptical about the usefulness of vedic rites in eliminating suffering and misery, reverently approached Bhagavān Kapiladeva to receive his message regarding the means of the definitive ending of duḥkha. This disciple is Maharṣi Āsuri. Hence, it is a sannyāsin who is averse to the world like Maharṣi Āsuri is, the really competent recipient (adhikārin) of the knowledge of the Sāṁkhya (Philosophy). In Chapter 20 of book II of Śrīmad Bhāgavata-Saṁhitā, Śrī Bhagavān says to Uddhava :

nirviṇṇānām jñānayogo nyāsināmiha karmasu.....

(7)

— It is only those who are extremely averse to the saṁsāra and consequently indifferent to actions that lead to the fulfilment of mundane desires are competent to take to Jñāna-yoga.

In Chapter 3 of Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā Śrī Bhagavān tells Arjuna :

“jñānayogena Sāṁkhyānām”— the followers of the Sāṁkhya (way) have competence in Jñāna-yoga.

It follows that it is only those who follow the path of jñāna are fit for the Sāṁkhya-knowledge. The essential nature of this Jñāna-yoga has been characterized thus in the Brahma-Rudra Saṁvāda in Śānti Parvan, quoted in Quarter 4, Chapter 2, of this book :

evam hi paramātmānam kecidicchanti paṇḍitāḥ,
ekātmānam tathātmānamapare jñānacintakāḥ. (13, Chap- 351)

— One class (followers of the Bhakti-mārga) of sages wish to attain the Paramātmān by devoting themselves to this kind of sādhana. There are others, the yogins who think in terms of Knowledge (the followers of the Sāṃkhya way) by constantly meditating on themselves as no other than Parabrahman Himself or, meditating on the nature of the pure Self, attain Him. This Sāṃkhya-knowledge has been elaborately expounded in the “Vasiṣṭha and Karāla-Janaka Saṃvāda” and “Yājñavalkya-Janaka Saṃvāda” quoted in the previous Quarter. To avoid repetition it is not reproduced here. It may be noted however that the essence of this Jñāna-yoga is that the sādḥaka will meditate on himself as the imperishable, eternal, liberated, Self (Ātman) who is beyond the guṇas. The visible world is separate and distinct from him; he is the spectator, the pure witness ; his identifying himself with his body and other external objects springs from error on his part; he is beyond all these, “nirguṇa”. Thus, on the one hand, through an extreme aversion towards external objects like the physical body and, on the other hand, by the constant practice of meditation of the Ātman as distinct from the body and so on, he becomes finally established in the Ātman ; hence, he becomes completely emancipated from the suffering that is caused by the involvement with the body (and other objects). Nevertheless, the sense of self-identification with the body and other objects is an error which is always present in all bound souls (baddha jīva); to dispel this error, it is necessary to examine the nature of the visible world, both gross and subtle. When one knows through such examination all the states, subtle as well as gross, of all visible objects, one can dissociate oneself totally from these; for, unless one knows the true nature of the visible world the sense of self-identification with some subtle element in it may persist;

hence, the sādḥaka gets himself stuck in it. Knowing therefore the subtle, the subtler and the most subtle states of the visible world, the sādḥaka should think of himself as distinct from all this— as the mere spectator of all this. This is the reason why, in the Sāṃkhya-śāstra, the true nature of the visible world has been revealed by a thorough examination of it and the jīva has been represented as distinct from all this and free (by nature). Proceeding to teach the Jñāna-yoga of the Sāṃkhya (School of thought) the author of the Sāṃkhya Darśana has affirmed that the visible world is divided into 24 Cosmic categories and in order to make out that the Puruṣa is separate from all this says :

śarīrādivyatiriktaḥ pumān (1. 139)

— The Puruṣa (Ātman) is distinct from products of Prakṛti like the physical body.

Proceeding to teach how “mukti”, the highest goal of man can be achieved the Sāṃkhya-kāra says :

Jñānānmuktiḥ (3. 23)

bandho viparyayāt (3.24)

— Liberation comes through Knowledge (3.23)

— Bondage comes from Ignorance (3.24)

It is from the knowledge of one's true self which exists as separate and distinct from Prakṛti and Her products that the Puruṣa becomes liberated; and through its opposite, that is, through self-identification with the body and other natural objects the bondage of the Puruṣa comes about.

As to how this Knowledge of discrimination (viveka) occurs the Sāṃkhyakāra says :

tattvābhyāsānneti netīti tyāgādvivekasiddhiḥ. (3.75)

— this knowledge of discrimination (between Puruṣa and Prakṛti) is achieved through persistent reflection on the nature of the Ātman and from meditation on detachment from

Prakṛti in the following order : "I am not the body, I am not the manas, nor am I the buddhi" and so on.

Hence, Jñāna-yoga is essentially aversion towards worldly objects and the discriminative knowledge of the Ātman and it is this that has been propounded by the Sāṃkhya Darśana by various arguments and analyses. In Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā the great sage Veda-Vyāsa too has explained Jñāna-yoga in precisely thus; for instance :

At the outset of the battle of Kurukṣetra when Śrīmannaradeva Arjuna having been seized with intense aversion towards the world (vairāgya) Śrī Bhagavān first taught him this very Sāṃkhya yoga. In order to arouse in the heart of Arjuna "Ātmānātma-viveka" (discrimination between the self and the not Self) Śrī Bhagavān said to him :

antabanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīraṇaḥ,
anaśino'prameyasya tasmād yudhyasva bhārata. (18)

ya enaṃ vetti hantāraṃ yaścainam manyate hatam,
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṃ hanti na hanyate. (19)
na jāyate mriyate vā kadāci-

nnāyaṃ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ,
ajo nityaḥ śaśvato'yaṃ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre. (20)

vedāvināśinaṃ nityaṃ ya enamajamavyayam,
kathaṃ sa puruṣaḥ pārtha kaṃ ghātayati hanti kaṃ. (21)

vāsāṃsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gṛhṇāti nara'parāṇi
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇānyanyāni saṃyāti navāni dehī. (22)

nainaṃ chindanti śastrāṇi nainaṃ dahati pāvakaḥ,
na cainaṃ kledayantyāpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ. (23)

acchedyo'yamadāhyo'yamakledyo'yaśoṣya eva ca,
nityaḥsarvagataḥsthānuracalo'yaṁ sanātanaḥ. (24)

avyakto'yamacintyo'yamavikāryo'yamucyate
tasmādevaṁ viditvainaṁ nānuśocitumarhasi. (25)

* * * * *
eṣā te'bhihitā sām̐khye * * * . (39)

[Chapter : 2 Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā]

The essence of this teaching is this. Śrī Bhagavān says to Arjuna : "O, Arjuna! the Jīva is separate and distinct from the body (and other objects); birth and death are characteristics only of the physical body; in the true nature of the Jīva, these characteristics do not exist ; it is owing to ignorance that the Jīva feels himself as possessed of these characteristics. O, Pārtha (Arjuna)! You, Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all others are essentially (in your true nature) eternal and indestructible; hence, there is no possibility of your annihilation. Physical objects like the body, are indeed ephemeral, there is no doubt; this being so, why are you so troubled by the prospect of slaying them? With the destruction of these (bodies) the Jīva is not destroyed. * * I have told you all this according to the discourse of Sām̐khya Knowledge.

In the Sām̐khya-śāstra, it is the "Jñāna-yoga" which consists essentially in the knowledge of the true nature of the visible world and the Ātman that is distinct from It is described. Since, the essence of the Sām̐khya philosophy lies in the knowledge of knowing oneself as separate and beyond the visible world, discrimination from the visible world of guṇas on the one hand and the single minded reflection on the self as, in its essence, eternally free by nature, on the other, — this thought is the originator of Jñāna-yoga and its establisher. Every person, when he becomes exceedingly averse to the

objects of this world should strive to acquire this Self-knowledge (Ātma-jñāna). Hence, the plurality of puruṣas is acknowledged by the Sāṃkhya-śāstra. In reality “baddha” jīvas are many and “mukta” puruṣas (jīvas) too, are many ; again, Īśvara too is eternally free and, by virtue of His omniscient character, apparently separate and distinct from all beings; this has been specifically expounded in Quarters 3 and 4 of Chapter 2. It is this apparent plurality of puruṣas which Bhagavān Kapiladeva has, in his own Sāṃkhya-sūtra, mentioned as “Puruṣa-bahutva” (the plurality of Puruṣa). Nevertheless, he has not shrunk from describing the jīvas as only reflections of the Paramātman in Prakṛti. Śrī Bhagavān Veda-vyāsa too has, in the earlier quoted passages from Chapters 350 and 351 clearly mentioned the plurality of puruṣas as made out by Maharṣi Kapiladeva. When, by this jñāna-sādhana the Sāṃkhya-yogin is able to know himself as wholly separate and distinct from the visible world of Prakṛti, Brahman as the ultimate Ground of all is spontaneously revealed to him and he, thus attains mokṣa. When this happens, the true nature of the jagat and the jīva is wholly revealed to them; hence, nothing that is to be known, remains unknown to them.

The process of sādhana of the sādhakas who take to the path of bhakti is entirely different from this. Their intelligence is naturally synthetic in character; they are able to see unity in the midst of the diversity of this world. “Who I am, what the nature of the world around me is like, how I am related to this world, whence this entire cosmos comprising moving and immobile objects has come, in what this world is established and in what again, it dissolves”— this mode of reflection becomes settled in their minds; they are free from aversion to both worldly happiness and distress. Unlike the jñāna-yogins, they, finding the saṃsāra filled with sorrows and sufferings, they do not keep thinking as to how to escape from them. Whether it is happiness or misery in this world, whatever may happen, they accept with an unruffled mind; this is not a matter of particular concern to

them. "Whence has this world peopled by an infinite variety of jīvas, rendered attractive by such a variety of objects for enjoyment, has sprung? How does it subsist, and what again, is its ultimate destination? And, how have they related to it?" — these are the questions that exercise their minds. It is for these exalted souls endowed with an immense conceptual power that Śrī Bhagavān Veda-vyāsa has revealed, disclosing the full significance of the Śrutis (Upanisadic Utterances) in the "Vedānta Darśana" known as the "Brahma-sūtra". In chapters 350 and 351 of Śānti Parvan quoted in the previous Quarter, he himself has revealed it in clear terms. In Brahma-Rudra Saṁvāda which occurs in those two Chapters, it has been stated that the many puruṣas that exist in this visible world are, the emanations and portions of the One Puruṣa, that from the one Puruṣa all that exists has been manifested; that Puruṣa is nirguṇa and yet, at the same time, saguṇa; He has His heads everywhere in the Universe, so are His arms, legs eyes and noses; though one, He moves about at His will and pleasure in all spheres; being associated with the body as the "kṣetra" (field) and the seeds of good and evil, knows them all. That Person who is endowed with the attributes of unity and grandeur has been affirmed as One in the Śruti ; it is He Who is denoted by the appellation "Mahāpuruṣa" (the supremely exalted person); He is eternal ; and it is He who remains holding the entire cosmos. Knowing that inconceivable Puruṣa in His intra-cosmic as well as essential extra-cosmic aspects of the Viśva, Taijasa, Prājña and Turīya, the sādḥaka, who worships and adores Him with loving devotion attains that supreme Puruṣa. Wise Men who have taken to the path of bhakti by worshipping and meditating on this "Advaita" Brahman with bhakti attain Him; hence it is that mokṣa which consists in total cessation from evil and suffering (duḥkha), for which the jñāna-yogins take to the path of Sāṁkhya, is brought about for the bhakti yogins naturally, (without any conscious effort). It is these bhaktas who are fit to receive complete Brahmanvidyā. Knowing this world peopled by Jīvas of various kinds as

one with Brahman, they harbour ill-will towards none, hurt none ; they are not excessively attached to anyone ; they are not , on the other hand, intensely averse to the world either; they are equal-minded towards friends and well-wishers, companions, enemies, those who are indifferent, neutral and odious, towards saints and sinners, brāhmaṇas distinguished by learning and spiritual discipline and the outcastes, towards lions, tigers, snakes, dogs and all beings ; for, in their view all objects and beings are no other than Brahman Himself. Bhaktas, who are thus equal-minded towards all become naturally free from hatred, shame, fear, lust and anger. Towards whom should they feel hatred? For, the object of their hatred, no matter who he is, is no other than Brahman; in whose presence should they feel ashamed? For, the person who would arouse shame is Brahman Himself ; He knows everything, can anybody ever conceal anything from Him? This woman, blooming with youth— she is no other than an emanation of Brahman Himself; this being so, how can he be lustful towards her? This terrible snake, he too is no other than an emanation of Brahman; if this Brahman wishes to destroy it who can save it? Even through destruction He brings about the good of the world; hence, what sense is there in fearing anything? He who is about to strike me— he too is no other than Brahman; so towards whom should I feel anger? Thus through reflection (and meditation) on the Advaita Brahman the bhakta becomes automatically free from lust, anger and such other evil feelings and, becoming equal-minded towards everything, reposes under all conditions, on the sea of blissful serenity. He is full of compassion towards all creatures, offers comfort and solace to all, abounds in love for all beings; in order to overcome evil propensities like lust and anger he has no need for resorting to any separate sādhana. Through devotion to and meditation on the one, non-dual (advaita) Brahman, all his inner vicious tendencies are overcome. The spiritual exercises of the path of knowledge (jñāna-mārga) like śama (mental control) dama (control over the senses), titikṣā

(endurance of pain and suffering) uparati (abstention from sensuous pleasure and enjoyments), are accomplished naturally, (without any special effort). When he is thus fairly on his way to the attainment of such a blissfully serene state, all supernatural beings, like the gods and the demons, the yakṣas and the rākṣasas, beasts and birds, flies and insects— all become disposed to kindness and love towards him, he offers salutations to all as Brahman and greets them with love and affection. Consequently, no one wishes to behave with hostility towards him. When the bhakta thus becomes tranquil in mind and equal-minded towards every being, in his heart there arises a profound and intense yearning for the vision of Brahman, the ultimate Ground of all cosmic manifestations, in His true and essential nature. This is what is known as “Parābhakti” or “Prema” (divine love). This Love, even after embracing within his own self the entire cosmos constituted of guṇas is not satisfied; hence, transcending this (manifested cosmos) it is driven with tremendous force by an overwhelming longing to have a vision of Brahman as the Ground of all ; when this happens, God, who is unfailingly devoted to His bhakta reveals His true Self to him forthwith. Just as a “doll made of salt after plunging into the sea becomes the sea— indistinguishable from it; so, the loving devotee (bhakta) too, attaining his most beloved Brahman becomes united with Him. The final spiritual fulfilment that the jñānayogins achieved through “samādhi-yoga” and the discrimination between the Self and the not-self, comes with ease and without conscious effort, automatically, to the earnest bhakta. In “samadhipāda” of the Yoga-sūtra of Bhagavān Patañjali says— “Īśvara praṇīdhānādvā” (āśannatamaḥ samādhilābhaḥ phalaṁ ca bhavati, ‘praṇīdhānāt’ bhaktiviśeṣāt iti Bhāṣyakāraḥ) — through the “praṇīdhāna” (devoted meditation) of Īśvara, the attainment of samādhi and its fruit becomes easy.

It is for this reason that Śrī Bhagavān, has said in the Bhagavadgītā, Chapter 5.2 :

sannyāsaḥ karmayogaśca niḥśreyasakarāvubhau

tayostu karmasannyāsāt karmayogo viśiṣyate. *56

— Śrī Bhagavān said, both sannyāsa and karmayoga are conducive to the attainment of mokṣa ; nevertheless, of these two karmayoga is better than karma sannyāsa.

[5.2]

In Jñānayoga the impediments too, are many ; because on account of viewing the gods and demons, gandharvas, (semidivine beings) human beings — all as 'not-self' and consequently, separate, they produce obstacles in the way of the jñānayogin's "tapasyā". It has been said in Brāhmaṇa 4, Chapter 2 in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad :

"brahma tam parādād yo'nyatrātmano brahma veda; kṣatram tam parādād so'nyatrātmanah kṣatram veda; lokāntam parādūryo'nyatrātmano lokān veda; devāntam parādūryo'nyatrātmano devān veda; bhūtāni tam parādūryo'nyatrātmano bhūtāni veda ; sarvaṁ tam parādād yo'nyatrātmanah sarvaṁ veda ; idaṁ brahmedaṁ kṣatram ime lokā ime devā imāni bhūtānīdaṁ sarvaṁ yadayāmatma."

[Brāhmaṇa 4, Chapter 2]

— The man who knows the brāhmaṇa race (caste) as separate from his self, him the brāhmaṇa race overcomes. Similarly the man who regards the kṣatriya race as separate from his self, him the kṣatriya race gets the better of. Again, the man who regards the gods as separate from his self is conquered by the gods. The man who regards all beings as separate from his self is over-powered by them. Suffice it to say, he who regards all as separate from the self, all overcome him. These brāhmaṇas, these kṣatriyas, all

⁵⁶ Karmayoga here has to be understood as niṣkāma (desireless) "bhaktiyoga" ; this has been made clear in śloka 10 and 11 of that Chapter while, on the other hand, the jñānayogins, renouncing all prescribed karma as belonging to Prakṛti, takes to the path of pure knowledge ; this is the reason why the word sannyāsa here denotes Jñānayoga.

these worlds from this terrestrial world upwards, these gods, all these various beings — in one word, all these that are mentioned or unmentioned are permeated through and through with the Ātman.” (There exists nothing except the Ātman. This world comes into being from the Ātman, is established in the Ātman and at the end dissolves in the Ātman. The world is a power or emanation of the Ātman).

Nevertheless, whichever (of these paths) is difficult or easy, whichever is congenial to one’s nature is the best for him, and, when the ultimate result of both these paths (mārga) is same, the attempt to decide as to which of the two, Jñānayoga or Bhaktiyoga, is the best ends in a wholly futile dispute. For one who is fit for the bhakti-marga, it is bhakti that is the best; for one, who, on the other hand is fit for the jñāna-marga, jñāna is the best. If one takes to a particular sādhana, transgressing his competence and capacity (adhikāra), it does not become fruitful.

For those who naturally view the body and the other objects and generally the phenomenal world as a whole as full of misery, it is Jñānayoga which consists essentially in discriminating the self from the not-self, is the most suitable. The omniscient Guru will never tell them to contemplate the world as permeated by Brahman; for, such a mode of apprehension being naturally uncongenial to their temperament, for them it turns out to be not so agreeable. “The world is separate and distinct from the Ātman and the Ātman is no other than Brahman Himself”— meditation of this kind (that which is known as Jñānayoga) happens to be dear to a sādhanika of this nature and, when, even through such sādhana it is certainly possible to attain the Paramātmā, the guru who is solicitous about the spiritual well-being of the disciple, even though he himself knows about the higher Truth, teaches the Jñānayoga which is suitable for the nature of his disciple and doubtless this is the right thing to do. In Sāṃkhya-Darśana too, Maharṣi Kapila has imparted spiritual lesson of this kind to such a disciple. Those on the other hand, who are of a loving nature

by temperament, are devoid of antipathy towards the saṁsāra and are relatively indifferrent towards the joys and sorrows of this saṁsāra and whose minds are naturally of a synthetic kind— these persons are fit for Bhaktiyoga. To them, the omniscient Guru reveals the full Fruth regarding Brahman. They are capable of conceiving on the one hand, that the whole world is permeated through and through by Brahman, and on the other that the Jīva too is non-different from and one with Brahman. This is what has been revealed in the Vedānta-Darśana. The Vedānta-Darśana is therefore, dear to sādhakas who follow the path of bhakti and it is for them that its message is meant. In the Brahma-sūtra, it is the non-dualistic doctrine of Reality expressed by the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad in the earlier quoted statement, “sarvaṁ veda ; idaṁ brahma” (he knows all this to be Brahman) which Maharṣi Veda-Vyāsa has propounded by a thorough examination of the śrutis. That the subject-matter of Vedānta-Darśana is Brahman who is the Do-er and Maker of all, the ultimate Ground of all ; who is manifest in all cosmic forms and yet devoid of all visible form and who, in His Essence transcends all — Veda-Vyāsa has indicated at the very beginning of the text. As for instance, the first sūtra of Vedānta-Darśana.

1) athāto brahmajijñāsā.

After completing the study of the vedas and thus knowing the mantras, the devatās (gods), yajñas and karmas mentioned in the vedas and having thus fully known through reflection, all the underlying principles relating to them, one naturally feels a strong desire to know the supreme Brahman (Parabrahman) who is the Bestower of the fruits of all Vedic karmas, the One Presiding Deity of all yajñas and the Ruler and Controller of the gods. What the devoted disciple therefore is here, asking the ācārya is precisely questions such as : what is the relation between Him and the world, what is He like and how can one attain Him? At this, the ācārya, at the very outset makes this reply :

(2) “Janmādyasya yataḥ”.

He from whom this Universe peopled by various living beings as well as immobile objects, in whom all this remains sustained and, in whom, again, all this is dissolved—it is He who is the Brahman you have asked about (The world, in other words has no other constituent, its one and only “material cause” is Brahman and it is He who is also its one and only “efficient cause”. And yet, Brahman also remains transcending all this (manifested cosmos); since He has created it and is holding (sustaining) it and also dissolves it at the end.)

That complete Brahma-vidyā is the subject-matter of this text, Mahārṣi Veda-Vyāsa has therefore, made perfectly clear at the very outset. Nevertheless, it has been shown earlier that it is only the bhaktas who have competence in the worship of this advaita Brahman; the jñāna-yogins, on the other hand, have the requisite competence only in the critical discrimination between the self and the not-self; Brahman is represented to them (by the ācārya) as “nirguṇa” and “akartr” (inert, non-acting) ; He is not to be apprehended by jñāna-mārgin as the Maker of the cosmos. To view the world as Brahman is not the object of their sādhanā; the Brahma-sūtra, therefore, is a spiritual text which is meant to be resorted to only by a person who has taken to the path of bhakti. That the upāsanā (devoted meditation) of Brahman prescribed in Vedānta-Darśana is not merely discrimination between the Self and not-Self, Śrī Bhagavān Veda-Vyāsa has clearly pointed out in the sūtra 1.1.32 and in other places. In this sūtra (1.1.32) the three-fold character of “Brahmopāsanā” has been mentioned; proceeding to explain the term “Upāsātraividhyāt” (from the three-fold character of upāsanā) which occurs in the sūtra, even Śaṅkarācārya has said that “trividhamiha brahmaṇa upāsanam vivakṣitam — prāṇadharmeṇa, prajñādharmeṇa svadharmeṇa ca”. anyatrāpi..... upādhidharmeṇa brahmaṇa upāsanamāśritam” and so on. Meditation on the character of the jīva, of “prāṇa” as a limiting attribute (upādhi) and, in his own true nature (svarūpa) which transcends both

— it is this three-fold upāsanā of Brahman that has been mentioned here; it is the same elsewhere too. Thus, meditation on Brahman as jīva, as the material cosmos and beyond both, which is called Bhakti-yoga, being the subject taught in the Vedānta-Darśana, it is not suitable for the followers of the path of knowledge (jñāna-mārgin). The subject of the Vedānta-Darśana, being Brahman in His fullness and totality both the oneness and the plurality of the Puruṣa have been propounded in it and the many puruṣas mentioned in the Sāṃkhya Philosophy have been described in this book included in one, single Puruṣa. To suppose that this constitutes difference between the Sāṃkhya and the Vedānta-Darśana would not be correct. That there is, in reality, no contradiction between the two philosophies and that the differences between the two are attributable only to differences in the subject of inquiry and the innate capacity and competence of the disciple, Śrī Bhagavān Veda-Vyāsa himself has stated clearly in Brahma-Rudra Sāṃvāda in the Śānti Parvan ; this will be expounded separately later on through a full discussion and thorough examination of the two Darśanas. The “Pātaṃjala Darśana” follows the philosophy of the Sāṃkhya; hence its name, Sāṃkhya-Parīśiṣṭa (an Appendix to the Sāṃkhya Darśana). Nevertheless, this (Pātaṃjala) Darśana, so admirable that Veda-Vyāsa himself had written a Commentary on it (Bhāṣya). So, the Pātaṃjala Darśana along with this commentary will be separately expounded. But, the method of discourse in philosophy is of a somewhat different kind. Therefore, the six systems of Indian Philosophy (Ṣaṭ-darśana) will be discussed in three volumes with a separate title, namely “Dārśanika Brahmanvidyā” (Philosophical Brahmanvidyā). The first volume will contain the “Vaiśeṣika”, the “Nyāya”, the “Pūrva-mīmāṃsā, the Sāṃkhya-Pravacanasūtra”, the “Sāṃkhya-Kārikā” and the “Tattva-samāsa” ; the second volume will contain the “Pātaṃjala-Darśana” and third will comprise the entire “Vedānta-Darśana” along with the Bhāṣya. All these three volumes however are included in this main book and are companion volumes. If one reads them

after going through this main book it will be easier to understand the method of discourse in them.^{57*}

Here ends the Quarter one of Chapter three entitled Darśanādhikāra nirṇaya
(Determination of a person's capacity for and competence in a particular Darśana.)

OM TAT SAT

^{57/} As a matter of fact after having written this first quarter of the third Chapter the plan was to include the Vaiśeṣika Darśana in the second Quarter (of the third Chapter), the Nyāya Darśana in the third and the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā Darśana in the fourth; the first Quarter, then, of the fourth Chapter would comprise the Pātanjala-Darśana while, the Vedānta-Darśana would constitute the third Quarter and finally, the fourth Quarter would be constituted by the Upasamhāra (conclusion). Nevertheless, considering the suggestion of a friend of mine for publishing the Darśanas as separate volumes for the convenience of the readers as reasonable the section entitled Upasamhāra (conclusion) is put in this volume while the Darśanas are published in three separate books with separate titles.

CONCLUSION

1) Harmony among the various Darśanas

The method of teaching of Brahmaavidyā has been briefly indicated. The essence of this teaching is that Parabrahman is beyond the manifested cosmos ; both jīva and jagat are only parts of His Being — His specific (particular) powers. It is the lack of perception of the

Brahman-nature of Jīva and Jagat and (the sense of) self identification with the body that is the ultimate cause of the pain and suffering in this saṁsāra. The Jīva is one with Brahman who is devoid of any body, imperishable, beginningless and endless. The world of dead-matter too is in its essence Brahman. Nevertheless, the “jīva-śakti” is different from jaḍa-śakti (the power which resides in the world of matter). Showing the difference between the jīva-śakti and the jaḍa-śakti, the Sāṁkhya-kāra makes out that when the sādḥaka, by ceaselessly meditating on his own self as beyond all kinds of embodiment and as pure-Consciousness (cit), being established in his true self, becomes released from the bondage of saṁsāra. Every embodied jīva is, in his true nature, pure-consciousness ; hence, the jīvas are infinite in number. Śrī Bhagavān Veda-Vyāsa, disclosing the essence of the śrutis, has demonstrated in his own Vedānta Darśana that the jīva is beginningless and, in his essential nature, pure Consciousness (cit) ; this is true and it is also wholly true that the world of matter, which includes the physical body, is separate from the jīva; nevertheless, these innumerable jīvas are intrinsic elements of the Brahman, His eternal portions (amśa) ; The Jīva therefore, is naturally subject to the dispensation of Parabrahman; he does not possess full independence ; in the state of liberation his Brahman-nature is fully manifested ; hence, with regard to the goings-on in the world of phenomena, he becomes fully independent (svarāt). But even in that state, by his lack of ability in the matter of cosmic Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution, his subjection to Parabrahman at that time is demonstrated. It is this Parabrahman who is the final destination of the jīva. Hence, the plurality of puruṣas affirmed by the Sāṁkhya Philosophy is included in the Vedāntic concept of one Brahman. This is what has been revealed in Brahma-Rudra Saṁvāda of the Śānti Parvan; this has been mentioned before. Regarding the teaching of the Sāṁkhya-kāra to the effect that the material Universe consisting of the twenty-four tattvas — gross, subtle and causal — is “not-self” — anātman

(distinct from the jivātman), there is no difference of view between him and Śrī Bhagavān Veda-Vyāsa. Nevertheless, by reminding us of the series of śrutis regarding cosmic Creation he has demonstrated that this phenomenal world, constituted of the three guṇas, though separate and distinct from the “dr̥k-śakti” (jīva), it is a special kind of (external) “śakti” (or guṇa) ; it is not an entity that has an independent existence. The Creator, the Disposer (Sustainer) and Dissolver of this wonderful cosmos is the one Brahma ; He alone is its beginningless, permanent and unchangeable Ground and Support ; He alone is its efficient as well as material cause. However, there is this singular characteristic in His nature that in spite of His being the ultimate Disposer of the entire cosmic process, He does not become involved in it ; for, He is only the Ground (Substratum) of this “jagat” which is constituted of guṇas ; He is the “guṇin” (Possessor of guṇas) ; hence, He is, in His Essence, beyond the manifested cosmos. This point has been discussed extensively in (my) Vedānta-Darśana ; it is unnecessary therefore to repeat it here. The Sāṃkhya-kāra has described this world as constituted of the three guṇas and has demonstrated the existence of master-and-servant relation between Brahman and the “jagat”. However, in order to demonstrate the eternal detachment of Brahman, which is also fully in consonance with Vedānta he has described Brahman as perpetually “non-acting” (akartā) and bereft of all guṇas and Prakṛti as constituted of guṇas and separate from Brahman. In the Sāṃkhya view Prakṛti is separate and distinct from Brahman and yet like a “garbhadāsa” (slave by birth) is subjected to Brahman and constantly devoted to His service. Śrī Bhagavān Veda-Vyāsa has expounded the relation of difference-in-non-difference (Bhedābheda) ; this will be shown later while discussing Vedānta Darśana ; between this view of his and the Sāṃkhya view there is ultimately not much difference. The essentially guṇa-constituted and inert nature of the world is admissible to both ; so is the view that the world is eternally subject to Brahman and serves His purpose alone ;

nevertheless, the Sāṃkhya-kāra, taking chiefly into account the Brahman's eternal transcendence of the guṇas has said that these attributes of subjection and subservience to the Puruṣa are innate in the very nature of Prakṛti from beginningless time ; in the activities of Prakṛti Brahman exerts no driving force and has no active role to play; impelled solely by Her own nature, Prakṛti has been serving the purpose of Brahman from beginningless Time. However, to serve the purpose of another by adopting various devices is possible only for a conscious being (jīva) ; for Prakṛti whose unconsciousness is acknowledged in this view, it is not possible to subserve the interests of the Puruṣa by resorting to stratagems ; to resolve this contradiction the Sāṃkhya-kāra has said that though Prakṛti is, by nature, devoid of consciousness owing to Her constant proximity to conscious Brahman (attribute of) the consciousness of Brahman is insilled into Her. Just as a piece of iron comes to possess magnetic characteristics through proximity to a magnet and yet the magnet remains separate from the piece of iron just as it was before so, Prakṛti too, remaining in proximity to the conscious Brahman, imbibing His nature and becoming as if conscious, serves the purpose of the Puruṣa(Brahman). It is the conscious character that is thus instilled into Prakṛti which is the driving force in bringing about the entire cosmic process. Hence, the view that the conscious Force (citi-śakti) issuing from Brahman, sets in motion the guṇas of Prakṛti is not altogether inadmissible to the Sāṃkhya-kāra. The Sāṃkhya-kāra however, keeping in view in particular the aloofness that is essentially characteristic of Brahman, holds that the inherence of the power of consciousness in Prakṛti takes place automatically, without any active role on the part of Brahman. The Vedānta-kāra, on the other hand, in the course of his examination of the nature of the world as propounded in the śruti, following the path of Bhakti, has established that the subservience of Prakṛti to Puruṣa spring entirely from the impulsion from Brahman; it does not occur all by itself. It is Brahman therefore who is the cosmic

Creator - Īśvara ; Prakṛti which is constituted of guṇas is a specific form of the externally oriented power of Brahman. How Brahman, notwithstanding His being endowed with such power, persists as eternal, beyond all guṇas and as pure and clear Consciousness in His Essence — has been thoroughly expounded in the exposition of Vedānta Darśana ; it is unnecessary to repeat that here. All that needs to be said at this place is, on a calm scrutiny of both these views, it must become evident that there is no fundamental difference between them; it is only that, what is accepted by both — Sāṃkhya and Vedānta has been explained in different ways in accordance with the respective processes of sādhanā followed by both. Nevertheless, the capacity (and competence) for the sādhanā laid down in Vedānta Darśana is extremely comprehensive in nature ; hence, setting forth fully and extensively the truths revealed by the śrutis, Śrī Bhagavān Veda-Vyāsa has presented in it the complete Brahma-vidyā; the capacity (and competence) for the sādhanā as laid down in the Sāṃkhya Darśana on the other hand is one-sided; as a consequence of this, its teachings too are somewhat partial. Nevertheless, the ultimate outcome of both modes of sādhanā is mokṣa ; as to this there is not the slightest doubt ; this has been already established.

(2) The concept of the Avatāra and
the upāsanā of the deity .

with a form

Nevertheless, it is only one who has a very high competence in the sādhanā of bhakti is fit to receive complete Brahmanavidyā revealed in the Vedānta Darśana; that, seeing unity in a world where there are differences and diversities everywhere, to be equal-minded towards friends and foes, towards the learned and the ignorant, towards men and animals and all other objects is possible, is something that is beyond the comprehension of most

people ; hence, it is that Īśvara (Bhagavān), the Saviour of world who, assuming, from time to time changeless forms, has appeared, for the well-being all living creatures (jīvas), as partial or total manifestations of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara (Śiva) in this world of mortals; appearing in such divine forms and performing actions that are appropriate for all jīvas has taught the jīvas His own perennial “dharma” and has alleviated their pain and suffering. The religious scriptures of all countries testify in varying degrees, to the truth of this. This only demonstrates the infinite power of Brahman which has been affirmed in the Vedānta. Assuming on the one hand, some particular divine Form in order to instruct a particular sections of the people of this world and to relieve them of their sufferings and on the other hand to manifest, sustain and dissolve the entire Cosmos, remaining Himself formless and unmanifest— all this is possible only for that Supreme Divine (Parameśvara) endowed with inconceivable Power. The truth regarding the Incarnation (avatāra) of the Divine has been revealed thus in Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā :

yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata,
abhyutthānamadharmaḥ tadātmānam sṛjāmyaham. (7)

paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām,
dharmaśamsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge. (8)

[4th Chapter]

— O, Bhārata (Arjuna)! Whenever the decline of dharma and the rise of “adharma” occurs, I appear, creating Myself as a Jīva. In age after age I assume the form of an Avatāra for the protection of the good and destruction of the evil and the establishment of dharma.

[7, 8]

Whenever in this world there occurs an extreme scarcity of something it is usually replenished; this is the general rule that prevails in this world. When in the scorching heat

of sun in summer the scarcity of water is greatly increased, the rainy season sets in and the surface of the earth is flooded with torrential rains — it is then that autumn arrives and in the scorching Sun the sea of water disappears in no time. As in the external world of nature, so, when in the world of living beings too the rise of adharma and the extreme degenerations of human society occurs, when the agonized cries of oppressed men and women rend the air and rise in the sky then, to remove their misery, and to re-establish the lost ways of dharma, the emanations of God, the Ruler and Controller of the Universe, begin to be roused. At first the hearts of the jīvas dwelling in the higher (celestial) realms are melted at witnessing miseries of living creature; appearing in this world, they make efforts to alleviate the sufferings. When, through their solicitous care and effort, the heavy mass of evils is not dissipated then, Śrī Bhagavān (the Divine) manifests Himself through full or partial emanations of supreme deities like Brahmā.⁵⁸ It has been mentioned in our Purāṇas and other sacred texts that sometimes the “asuras” (demons), obtaining, through the power of their tapasyā, the boon of invincibility from the gods caused havoc in the world; during these periods too God Himself appeared assuming a body, and after bringing about their destruction and the deliverance of the human society from suffering and turmoil, disappeared again. Moreover, when demonic forces begin to plague the good and the virtuous the manifestation of the Divine becomes inevitable, for, God never tolerates the sufferings of the saints and the devotees. Besides, it is God Himself who appears as the teacher of “mokṣa-dharma” (the dharma that leads to liberation) ; for, it is difficult for the ignorant jīva to communicate to others the Truth regarding the nature of the Divine. When, therefore, the jīva’s thirst for salvation is intensified then to show him the right road to it (mokṣa) also divine Incarnation takes place. Thus, whenever the divine

⁵⁸ However, Viṣṇu is the embodiment of the ultimate beatific and sanctifying power of the Divine ; this is why in most cases the divine incarnation takes place through an emanation of Viṣṇu.

Incarnation takes place among the jīvas of this world the body He assumes is formed in such a way as to be capable of holding the Power for the manifestation of which He makes His special appearance on earth. Hence, He appears sometimes in a female, sometimes in male embodiment ; sometimes, He is born in a celestial realm assuming a divine body ; sometimes, on the other hand, He manifests Himself in the world of mortals in a human body ; sometimes again, He is not averse to assuming even an animal or some other lower, non-human body and there are times when He even assumes, if occasion demands, a wonderfully mixed body (as for instance the “Narasimha”).

The images of divine Avatāras become objects of worship by the people at large. Those who are unable to fully take to the path of vedānta, those whose intelligence is incapable of meditation on Brahman as immanent in the entire Cosmos and also as transcendent (to it), those who, owing to their inveterate sense of difference, are unable to be equal-minded towards all (the great majority of human beings are of this kind)—for them, the worship of the divine image is an excellent sādhana of the Bhakti-mārga. In the concluding Chapter of (my) discourse on “Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā Darśana” the permanent relationship between “śabda” (mantra), rūpa (form) and the mental faculty has been explained in detail.⁵⁹ On

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For the convenience of the reader it is quoted here :

“The final opinion of Mahārṣi Jaimini is that between Sanskrit words and the objects they denote, an eternal relationship exists; if mantras are articulated correctly they are certainly capable of producing fruits which are their objects signified (by the mantras). Vedic words, it is true, are signs for signifying the objects (denoted by them) ; nevertheless, these signs have come down to us from time immemorial and are natural ; they are not imaginary. The significance of this will be made somewhat clearer through an example. Some forms are so terrible and monstrous that the very sight of them arouses fear in all creatures. Those who are dumb, cannot speak and so, express what they feel or think through special signs or gestures,— if they, in order to express a terrible idea shows another person a terrifying figure then it must be admitted that this is a case of an use of a sign. Nevertheless, the sign, in and by itself is able to arouse fear

in the mind of the spectator through its own intrinsic power ; hence, although it is a sign, it is regarded as natural sign. All sanskrit words are of this kind ; there is no doubt that they are signs which denote objects or express ideas ; but they are as has been just noted, 'natural signs' ; the relations they have with the denoted objects are natural, not imaginary. Śrī Bhagavān Veda-Vyāsa, has ascertained this in his commentary on sūtra 27 of "Samādhipāda" of the "Yogasūtra" ; it will be later explained when we will come to discuss this sūtra.

Nevertheless, all kinds of words do not have this natural relation with their objects; there certainly exist words that are purely imaginary; and in most of the languages that are current at present in the world, the majority of words are such purely imaginary sounds as signs; nevertheless, in every language there are some words which are natural signs ; however, owing to faulty pronunciation even these have suffered distortions. Sanskrit, which is called "deva-bhāṣā" (the language of the gods) is not of this kind ; it is a perfect ("siddha") language ; in it the relation between the word and its meaning is eternal; this is the reason why it is called the "divine language" (deva-bhāṣā) in this country. To understand this thoroughly is however, exceedingly difficult. Hence, an attempt will be made to make this point somewhat clearer in what follows.

That particular sounds (śabda) have permanent relations (correspondences) with particular forms (rūpa) is a fact which is now being demonstrated by Modern Science. As a matter of fact, every sound (word) has its own corresponding visible form. Those who have studied the modern science of Sound that sound cause waves in the air when it enters the ear-hole ; the forms of these waves are transformed with changes in the sounds; with the help of these forms (of the waves) corresponding sounds can be reproduced. It is from this correspondence between "form" and "sound" the modern device called "phonograph" has been invented. From the study of the science of Sound it has recently been discovered in the west that musical compositions or melodies have various visible forms ; through the mechanical device called "Eidophone", Margaret Hughes has recently published the forms of western musical scores ; hence, there is no reason to doubt that sounds have forms.

Again, every form (image) is expressive of some characteristic mental power or capacity. Every feeling or idea is expressed through some form (image) or the other. When one is angry the facial expression assumes specific form ; the postures of other parts of the body too assume a specific state. When, on the other hand, the emotion of love arises all these are changed and another specific form and physical posture or gesture is manifested. Such alterations in the outward form accompanying changes of mental states becomes more or less perceptible to the uneducated as well as the educated people. That specific forms

(apparencess) are expressive of specific feelings or ideas, even western men of science are now beginning to admit. The science of ascertaining the nature of a person by his physical appearance too has now begun to be taught. Even without any special education, men, relying on the outward appearances of persons, naturally judge their defects and merits and on many occasions judgements of this kind also turn out to be right. As a matter of fact, among the feelings and mental attitudes of men some are transient while some others are relatively stable and permanent. The permanent (settled) state of mind, which is called one's mental power and by which one's general character and temperament is ascertained— it is according to this that the physical appearance of every human being is formed and with changes in the fleeting feelings and attitudes, the gestures and postures of that outward form keep changing. With advance in age, education and the influence of sādhanā (spiritual effort) as the general nature of human beings keeps changing so their outward looks also are altered. The differences in the external forms (rūpa) of human beings are not fortuitous ; there is nothing in this world that is accidental or fortuitous ; it is differences in the inner natures of human beings that cause differences in their external forms. The authors of the śāstras in our country affirm that the jīva, after being conceived in the mother's womb assume the nature acquired by the karmas of his earlier lives and mould, naturally and inevitably the outward form which is in consonance with this nature ; the specific (external) forms that are brought into being by the constituents of the food taken by the mother combined in specific forms produce specific shapes for her off spring; these specific forms are not accidental ; it is the inner faculties of the foetus in the mother's womb that constitute the efficient cause of these external forms. It must therefore be admitted that every visible form is expressive of some particular form of mental feeling or mental power. Each specific form expresses a specific mental power. Particular forms and particular mental states are connected by a permanent relation; wherever, in a particular jīva, one of them exists the other also must exist.

Moreover, it has been said before that particular visible forms are related to particular sounds (words). When every particular visible form is related to a particular mental power then, the corresponding sound (word), it must be admitted, will also be permanently related to that mental power. That every particular sound (word) is expressive of a particular feeling or idea is not alien to normal human experience. When one is angry one's voice is of one kind, while, on the other hand, when one is kindly disposed the voice has a different sound ; in like manner, with a change in one's state of mind the voice too is altered. When a certain voice is heard from a distance, we can often perceive whether it expresses anger or any other emotion. Even on hearing the sounds uttered by birds and beasts we are often able to grasp their import. The cause of the

difference in the quality of voice for different persons is also rooted in differences in their natures; grave tone is indicative of a sedate and serious character and temperament ; a light voice on the other hand, indicates a light-hearted, frivolous nature. The female voice and the male voice are never of the same kind. As a matter of fact, not a single event in this world is accidental ; the entire Universe is linked by causal relations ; the more our knowledge is developed, the more are these relations revealed to us. Just as in the case of the fact that there exists a regular correspondence between visible forms and mental states, so, too regarding the truth of a regular correspondence between sounds (words) and mental states, our day-to-day experience is entirely favourable.

It follows that with our feelings and ideas and mental powers, sounds and forms are related permanently— with a regular correspondence. Every sound (word) has a concomitant visible form and is expressive of a specific character and temperament. If the vocabulary of a particular language happens to be such that every word in it denotes only an object which is cognate or kindred with it in form and nature then, that language is really a perfect (siddha) language ; it can be said of that language that the words of that language are natural signs for their denoted objects and that the relation between them too is constant. The great sage Jaimini has pronounced that the vedic language alone is such a language ; hence, it is a perfect language— “siddha bhāṣā”.

If words are connected with their objects with a constant relation it is easily understandable that with their (appropriate) combinations perfect “sentences” too can be formed. Maharṣi Jaimini declares that it is not only Vedic words but also Vedic sentences that have regular and constant relations with the meanings they convey. In his opinion, in Vedic sentences the verb is the main thing; other parts of speech only expand the meaning of the verb. As a matter of fact, if the words fully denote their objects it is not at all surprising that the sentences formed with such words should be fully expressive of their intended imports (meanings). Whether this is the actual fact is indicated by their fruits (results). Nevertheless, the fact that Vedic karmas are capable of producing their ordained fruits is admitted by Indian philosophers of all persuasions. Maharṣi Jaimini says that Vedic statements being sentences with perfectly determined significances, those karmas which have been enjoined by the Vedas as obligatory, are actually so ; if these karmas are performed according to prescribed rules they must, by virtue of the truth (validity) of Vedic statements, produce the mentioned fruits ; there is no doubt about it.

Another matter needs to be stated at this point. It has been said earlier, that between the sound (word) and the form on the one hand, and between both and one's innate nature, on the other, there is a

constant relationship. It follows that if the outward form (appearance) of a man is expressive of his inner nature then, if the sound (word) that corresponds to that form and nature is known, that sound or word (śabda) can be regarded as the natural name of that man. The message of our “śāstrakāras” is that the Vedic Deities have their natural names ; they were revealed to the ancient ṛṣis. By the repeated articulation of “mantras” which comprise their names, (loud) chanting and remembrance of them and meditation on the meaning of the mantra, the gods are attracted and appearing before the sādḥaka, they fulfil their desires ; this is the message of the Ārya-śāstras.

Nor does it seem to be untenable if one ponders the matter a little closely. If I want to acquire a particular quality (courage, for instance), meditate on it ceaselessly— day and night— this quality (courage) is instilled into my mind. From what has been said before it will be easily understood that the quality called “courage” has its corresponding form and sound (word) ; hence, if one meditates on that form (image) and repeatedly articulates and recollects that sound (word or words), it will be tantamount to meditation on courage itself ; hence, through constant meditation on the “mantra” and the “rūpa” (form) of the Deity (or a jīva of a higher order) whose essential characteristic is “courage”, the distinctive nature of that Deity will certainly become the inalienable possession of the sādḥaka. When the sādḥaka, attains identity of nature with the Deity, that Deity, attracted by him (the sādḥaka) reveals Himself (or herself) to him and favours him. This is the general rule in this world. It is a common experience of this world that persons of kindred nature are naturally drawn towards one another and thus offer mutual assistance. The same is true of the gods. Hence, for this reason too, it cannot be concluded that the efficacy of vedic karmas is untenable and impossible ; on the contrary, this is a perfectly valid inference.

Regarding this, there is something else that needs to be said ; just as I am able to subject another person to my control by exerting sufficient physical force so, also, I can exercise control over him through the application of mental force. In this country, the magical technique of subduing others to one's own will (vaśīkaraṇa vidyā) had been widely cultivated in ancient times. The power of mantras, the intrinsic power of a particular substance and will-force as also the combination of all these— all these methods used to be practised in this country in earlier times. That it is not at all impossible is now being demonstrated nowadays in the West through the study of scientific methods like Hypnotism. The omniscient ṛṣis had had full knowledge of the hidden principle of this science. After producing fire and installing it by specific means, and thus offering oblations at specific times with specific substances, mantras and “mudrās” (body gestures) they were able to attract particular deities ; charmed by these mantras the gods would appear and fulfil their desires. In the

Purāṇas and the Itihāsas the wonderful feats of the ṛṣis relating to these matters have been recounted at many places. Even today, it cannot be said that the power of mantras has totally disappeared from this land of India. Even today, the sādhakas of India are getting evidence of the powers of mantras (mantra-śakti). Even ordinary snake doctors display the intrinsic power of substances and mantras, to this day. But under the influence of western education all such matters belonging to this land are regarded only as deception ; people who are educated in this manner are often unwilling even to test the validity of these phenomena. Indeed, deception being, in many cases, mingled with truth people are naturally disinclined to believe that there may be an element of truth in them. That at all events, the validity of mantra-śakti is not repudiated even by scientific investigation— this is what is indicated here briefly.

The essential principle of the Indian mode of worshipping the Divine in a visible form (sākāra-upāsanā) has been briefly described above ; nevertheless, worshipping the Divine image is not just this and no more ; it contains besides, a deeper mystery. If what has been said in the section on Brahma-vidyā is thoroughly grasped, all this will be automatically intelligible. For instance, there being a special habitation and manifestation of the power of Viṣṇu in “śālagrāma” (a sacred, rounded black stone worshipped as Viṣṇu) and and Śiva in Bāṇa-limṅga (a sacred, black stone with the shape of the male genital worshipped as Śiva). They have become objects of worship throughout India. Just as natural symbols like the sun are worshipped, on account of the abundance of divine power as Brahman, so too are natural symbols like the “śālagrāma”.

These arguments are presented for the comprehension of the general public. In the Śruti, the Smṛti and other śāstras however it has been related that Prajāpati (Brahmā) manifested this wonderful cosmos with the help of Vedic mantras ; it has been stated for instance in the śāstras:

“nānārūpaṁ ca bhūtānaṁ karmanāṁ ca pravartanam, vedaśabdebhya evādaṁ nirmimīte sa Īśvaraḥ (that omnipotent Īśvara created the various visible forms of all beings through utterance of sacred vedic words). Moreover, in vedic statements like “sa bhūrīti vyāharan bhūmimasṛjata” (He, uttering the word “bhū”, created the terrestrial Realms like the Earth) and “eta itī vai prajāpatirdevānasṛjata” (uttering another vedic word He created the gods) the Śruti itself has revealed— by the utterance of which mantra Prajāpati (Brahmā) had created and manifested the worlds like the Earth and the (higher) jīvas like the gods. For, people living in the present age it is very difficult, owing to lack of adequate knowledge, to grasp the true significance of these statements. That by means of singing of musical scores (compositions) the figures of trees, leaves, flowers and young spouts are formed, has recently been shown by the afore-mentioned Margaret Hughes in her book “Eidophone Voice Figures”. Every intelligent person must, after reflecting on this matter, be able in some

reading that text (Pūrva-mīmāṃsā Darśana) it will become quite clear that when Śrī Bhagavān assumes avatāra (incarnation) the visible form in which He manifests Himself is expressive of all the special powers exhibited in that particular body; it can be easily inferred that He assumes precisely, that kind of visible form (body) which subserves the purpose for which He incarnates Himself and is appropriate to the kind of power He manifests. Hence, the statement of the śāstrakāras to the effect that through meditation on those divine forms with adoration and the chanting, utterance and remembrance of the words (names) which have been referred to before as “mantras”,— which correspond to them (the divine forms), the jīva can attain identity with the Deity, is entirely right ; it is not superstition. Through remembrance of the name of the Divine Avatāra, meditation on Him and reflection on His qualities and exploits, the jīva attains (the state of) absorption in Him ; hence, owing to this self-absorption in the Divine, the sense of His omnipresence becomes naturally accessible to them and thus they gradually become included among “adhikārins” of the highest order. This is the Indian mode of “sākara upāsana” (worship of the Divine in visible forms) ; it is the worship of the Divine Himself and not idolatry ; it is, on the contrary, an extremely easy and excellent sādhana of the “Bhakti-marga”. First, an attempt is made to mould the images which resemble as far as possible the forms of the deities which have been portrayed in the śāstras. Then, one attempts, by the application of mantra-śakti, to infuse into the image the power that is characteristic of the Deity ; then,

measure to realize the value of the afore-mentioned statements of the śāstras. Hence, if the origin and source of the creation of the gods is mantras formed by words, then, if the mantras which constitute the ultimate sources of the gods and which are revealed by the all-knowing śāstras, are articulated properly, the appearance of the Deity signified by the mantra becomes inevitable - that this is so, can be comprehended through a little serious reflection. “Mantra śakti”, is therefore truly “mahā-śakti” (great power); it should never be trifled with. When, through “upāsana”, the mind of the sādhanaka is gradually purified, the appearance of the Deity is witnessed through the articulation of mantras ; this is the revelation of the śāstras.

finally, God, the inner knower of all, subdued by the bhakti of the sādḥaka fulfils the desires of the sādḥaka emanating from that very image. He is present everywhere, and as such the image is not alien to Him. The person who wishes to worship Him and yet is incapable of conceiving His cosmic emanence,— for the well-being of such a person He manifests His own power even from the limited form of the image. If a person, who is unable to contemplate the entire cosmos as Brahman Himself becomes able to accept even one object as Brahman, what is wrong in this? That person has learnt to conceive as Brahman at least one object, namely, the image. When this conceptual power of his is further developed his mind becomes prepared automatically and thus, he (that person) attains the capacity, later, to contemplate the entire cosmos as Brahman ; finally that clear-sighted sādḥaka, through meditation on the supreme Brahman who transcends even the entire cosmos, can attain the supreme Realization (of Parabrahman). When the sādḥaka worships the image believing the image to be Brahman Himself, it is the Brahman-nature of the image that is revealed to the sādḥaka ; nevertheless, Brahman, on account of this is not reduced to the state of the image. Worshipping divine symbols like the Sun too as Brahman has been enjoined in the śāstras ; in the Brahma-sūtra, Veda-Vyāsa has stated this clearly; it has been set forth in the discourse of Vedānta Darśana. That the śāstrakāras have recommended the worship of Brahman in images for persons of lesser spiritual competence and capacity will be shown from this śloka from Śrīmad Bhāgavata which is quoted below :

arcādāvarcayettāvadīśvarammām svakarmakṛt,
yāvanna veda svahr̥di sarvabhūteṣvavasthitam.

[3.29.25]

— As long as a man remains unable to feel established in his own heart, Me, as Īśvara who is immanent in all beings⁶⁰ he should worship Me in symbols and perform duties that are obligatory at his stage of life (āśrama).

The Brahmovādin ṛṣis therefore were not superstitious; they have not represented the worship of the images of particular deities as the highest form of religion. They have enjoined diverse modes of worship which are in accordance with the respective “adhikāras” of worshippers. One should always keep in mind this one essential difference between Hinduism and other religions of the world. In other religions the teaching is the same for all. It is not so in Hinduism. The ācāryas (teachers) of Hinduism have imparted only such spiritual lessons that the persons addressed are fit for and in order to instil faithful adherence to that teaching they have pronounced it as the highest and the best and urged them (the persons so addressed) to preserve it as a secret. This is not false or deceptive behaviour ; as a matter of fact, the practice of that religion alone for which one is fitted is the best for him; in relation to him, no other teaching is as good or excellent.

It will now be easily understood that the differences which exist between the worshippers of the diverse deities like the “śaivas”, (worshippers of the Śiva) the “śāktas” (worshippers of Śakti)— even these do not indicate differences of views among the ṛṣis. The “upāsanā” (worship) of Śakti (divine power), of Śiva and of other deities as well— all these upāsanās are essentially “Brahmopāsanā” (worship of Brahman); hence, there is no question of any difference or opposition here. Nevertheless, human nature is infinitely diverse. The colour, the sound or the form which is pleasing to one may be unpleasant to

⁶⁰ Meditation on Brahman within one’s heart which belongs to the Brahavidyā known (in the Upaniṣad) as “Daharavidyā” is here only an “upalakṣaṇa” (an individual for the species or a particular case for the general concept); as a matter of fact, it is Brahma-vidyā of the higher order which should be understood as implied here.

another. The mental character and temperament that delights a certain person may be odious to another. Hence it is, that different person love to worship divine images of diverse forms and natures. There are some who love to worship female forms of Brahman; there are others who delight in the worship male forms (of Brahman); that Brahman with various male or female forms have incarnated Himself in the world (as avatāras) this has been stated before ; of these it is that form which is the most congenial to the nature of the sādḥaka, he accepts as his own object of worship (upāsya). It is in this way that in India the diversity of sādḥaka "sampradāyas" (religious sects or communities) has been enjoined and introduced. It is thus that the worship of gods and goddesses of diverse forms and natures has been initiated. It is the ṛṣis who have taught and prescribed all these. It does not reveal in the slightest degree their superstition or opposition of view; it demonstrates on the contrary, their wide experience, liberality of outlook and compassion towards all creatures.

3. Dīkṣā (Initiation) and Nāma-sādḥana (The sādḥana which consists in nāma-japa)

The external outline of Brahma-vidyā as it had been developed and consummated in India is thus briefly represented. To conclude this section of the present book, one or two things concerning the preliminary principles of the inner spiritual process will be mentioned.

To learn all other branches of knowledge one needs a guru ; without any help from another person, it is impossible for anyone to completely master any branch of knowledge. Brahma-vidyā is the most difficult of all "vidyās" (sciences or branches of knowledge).

Brahmavidyā is more difficult than any other “vidyā” and it can also be described as the essence of all other sciences. To resort to a guru is therefore most needed for learning this “vidyā”. After studying books dealing with spiritual concept and then, with the regular practise of mental concentration an intelligent person, it is true, can even attain various occult powers; this however may, in some cases lead to disasters; nevertheless, whatever may be the case regarding learning in general, the attainment of the road to liberation (mokṣa-mārga), as the great ṛṣis have declared is impossible without the Grace of the Sadguru. All classes of sādhakas in India, have, in all ages testified to this. There are two currents of forces operating in this world : One of them flows along “pravṛtti-mārga” (the road that leads towards the world of phenomena), the other flows along the “nivṛtti-mārga” (the road that leads to liberation). The current that flows along “pravṛtti-mārga” expands the saṁsāra; the current that flows along “nivṛtti-mārga”, on the other hand, leads the outward-turning jīva back to (his source) the Parabrahman. It is through the union of the male and the female in the world of living beings that the saṁsāra grows and expands; the union between the two sexes is seen even among plants and creepers ; this is the perennial and general rule for procreation in this world. The items of food that the male eats is also eaten by the female counterpart; nevertheless, the foodstuff thus taken generates the seminal fluid in the male body alone, not in the female body. Without receiving that seed (semen) from the male body the female consort by herself is not able to produce offspring by preparing that seed from the food she takes; this is the perennial law. This rule (process) has come down in uninterrupted continuity from the beginning of cosmic manifestation; without subjection to this universal law the world of beings (saṁsāra) cannot expand. The all-seeing ṛṣis have affirmed that a similar law obtains in relation to the nivṛtti-mārga. Just as God, after creating the jīvas, for growth in number, has impelled them along the externally oriented pravṛtti-mārga through copulation

(between the two sexes) so, and at the same time, appearing as the guru, He, who has full knowledge of the ultimate verities in the realm of the Spirit, by propagating the seed of liberation (mokṣa-bīja) through a continuous line of disciples, has arranged for turning the minds of externally oriented jīvas inwards and also, finally, for their attainment of liberation. Receiving this seed of liberation (mokṣa-bīja), which has been transmitted in a continuous chain from time immemorial, from the Sadguru and cherishing it properly and with single minded devotion, Man attains liberation. It has been stated in the śāstras that even the Divine Himself, when He manifested Himself in the world of living beings as an avatāra, has always abided by this perennial rule.

In the present age, many persons are trying, by reading the śāstras alone to have the vision (Realization) of Brahman. Such an effort too does no doubt immense good ; nevertheless, this is not the means of the Realization of Brahman. No one therefore has ever heard that adopting this means anybody has ever achieved success. On the other hand, nowadays, the view is gaining ground that it is, as a matter of fact, not at all possible to have a vision of God; thinking that He is present everywhere - this is all that is meant by His "vision". This is not, in fact, true ; the Brahmovādin ṛṣis have declared that one can actually have a vision of God and they have also described the spiritual states the jīva experiences after having that vision and even today persons who have had a direct vision of God have not altogether ceased to exist. Hence, those who long for liberation should always keep this in mind.

And as for sādhakas in general, it should be remembered that in this Kali-yuga the yajña which consists in the performance of "nāma-japa" is as the all-seeing ṛṣis have revealed, more commendable than "yāga"s (ceremonial offerings, sacrifices) like "agniṣṭoma" which are performed with "dravyas" (appropriate substances) and "mantras". In this age of Kali, the efficacy of substances has naturally diminished ; it is witnessed by

all everyday and the “saṁskāras” (sanctifying ceremony) like “garbhādhāna” (a ceremony performed before conception) which the ṛṣis have enjoined for the purification of the body and mind, these too, having by now almost disappeared, in most cases, the brāhmaṇas too, who practise these rites performed with the help of “dravyas” and mantras are often seen to betray lack of adequate competence. Hence, it is “nāma-sādhana” (the sādhana which consists in nāma-japa) inculcated by the ṛṣis the best spiritual means for the jīvas of the latter-day Kali-yuga. What kind of nāma-sādhana will be more efficacious for what type of persons — that too the divinely perspicacious and supremely compassionate ṛṣis have laid down (in the śāstras); and the ācārya ṛṣis have taken care, actuated by compassion for the jīvas, to recommend those divine names which are designed to be most efficacious and fruitful for the people at large. For persons who seek their own spiritual well-being therefore the best thing to do is to engage in sādhana after receiving appropriate mantras from sādhakas who possess special knowledge and competence in relevant and appropriate spiritual matters. As a consequence of this one develops faith in one’s respective sādhana and one’s conviction grows firm; whoever will test it will be able to realize the validity of this teaching.

The crux of the matter is that the fruitfulness of a religious doctrine is realized only by actual practise; the truths of religion cannot be wholly grasped through superficial arguments and contentious disputes. Those who, even without practising (the truths of religion) themselves want at the outset, to obtain some evidence regarding the truth and validity of religion, should seek the company of persons who practise religion; these sādhakas, sometimes driven by compassion, provide evidence of the truths of religion to sincere, seekers after truth. There are many people who, lying down before temples at holy places like Vaidyanāth and Tārakeśvara as fasting supplicants, obtain their desired

objects soon ; visiting such places and witnessing their states, belief may be generated in one's heart.

Finally, the truth of the matter is that if one seeks the truth candidly and earnestly God, who knows everything from within certainly quenches the thirst of the *jīva* in some way or other. In India, even today, total disappearance of verifiable evidence for the perennial dharma (spiritual religion) has not occurred and though invisible themselves, the compassion of the ancient *ṛṣis* for the *jīvas* has not vanished. On the other hand the authors of the *sāstras* have affirmed that owing to the natural physical and mental debility of the *jīvas* in Kali-yuga the Ruler of the Universe is pleased with only a little effort on the part of the *jīvas* and the Grace of the gods and *ṛṣis* flows towards them even when after the *jīva* puts only a little effort. Just as when the full moon arises in clear sky even brightly luminous stars become invisible, but in the total darkness of the night at the new moon even the tiny firefly attracts the gaze of the viewer, so, in this age of the Kali which is comparable to the night at the new moon so far as religion is concerned, even a little (spiritual) effort on the part of the *sādhaka* draws the attention of the gods and the *ṛṣis* and even though they themselves remain hidden from the sight of the *sādhaka*, they proceed to assist him in various ways. Hence, though generally hostile to the practice of religion this Kali-yuga is extremely propitious for the simple-minded *sādhaka* who is an earnest seeker after the Truth. The (spiritual) results that could only be achieved through the practise of ascetic austerities in the past are all accomplished by the *sādhaka* with a very little exertion. There is no reason therefore for the *jīva* belonging to this Kali-yuga to give way to despair. What is lacking in this age is a sincere quest for the Truth. As soon as this want is removed there will no more be any cause for trouble and worry.

(4) An Appeal

Finally, in order to remind again the reader of what has been written in the introduction to this book, my humble appeal to the Indian people : it is on account of its lapse from dharma that India has been plunged in the slough of misery. If what constitutes one's innate and natural characteristic is not fully developed, one never achieves progress and prosperity. The people of India are naturally prone to religion. Just as even gold becomes mal-odorous and untouchable when it comes in contact with a base substance so, the Indian people too, fallen in the torrent of time and coming in contact with people who are alien and opposite in nature have become like those who are untouchable. Nevertheless, the Indian people should not become seized with despondency at the spectacle of their condition. Even the lion, the king of beasts, is surely overcome by slumber at some time or other under the influence of tamas ; then, even a tiny frog ignores him, seeing him as an inanimate object. The people of India too are now overpowered by deep, "tāmasika" slumber; consequently, they are now being trodden under feet and ignored by the people of all other countries. But, just as seeing the king of beasts (the lion) lying on the ground it is not right to suppose him dead and wrong to conclude that he has always remained inert and dead like this so, from seeing the present physically, mentally, morally and spiritually degraded state of the Indian people to conclude that they have always remained in this (degenerate) state and also to suppose that their re-emergence into prosperity is impossible is wrong and wholly erroneous. Nevertheless, just as gold is capable of attaining fully its resplendent form only through being burnt in fire and no other process is so effective for this purpose, so, if one resorts to alien methods to arouse the Indian people, ignoring their innate and distinctive nature, achievement of success is impossible. All sorts of utterances do not have the same effect on all persons. A particular utterance for instance, inspires me ; on others, however these have absolutely no effect ; again, another utterance thrills another person but, has no effect at all on me ; again, if one

wants to awaken a person who is asleep, he is aroused easily if he is called by his specific name ; a different name will not have the same effect. It is a phenomenon that is our common experience. If one observes the ingrained and distinctive characteristic of the Indian people also, it is perceived that even in these times of distress, destitution and agony, it is the love of dharma that emerges as their innate and dominant characteristic. Even today, if a yogin appears in the guise of a holy man at a certain place men and women of all ages, young and old alike, rush towards him to serve him, throwing to the winds all constraints. Those who have been educated in the English method — even they are not able, indeed, wholly to stop their minds from flowing in this direction; even they, like those whom they suppose to be uneducated people, are compelled, driven by their intrinsic nature, to behave in this manner. Even in these degenerate times, the Indian people are, in this matter in which they have a natural aptitude, in no way inferior to the people of any other country regarding courage, patience and wisdom. Let the people of India realize once that a certain course of action is virtuous or righteous you will see, even though that particular act is beyond the capacity of all other people, they will at once proceed to accomplish it fearlessly, smilingly and with effortless ease; at that moment, no amount of pain or suffering will seem to them excessive. On the other hand, the Indian people are never so eager for the acquisition of worldly happiness and prosperity. The Indian people believe that whether in times of trouble and distress or in those of happiness and prosperity, biological phenomena like eating or sleep are common to all living creatures and that compared to infinite Time even a hundred years in this world is nothing. He who is today exercising his dominion over me may, in future, after his death, be born to live under my dominion. The people of India accept the doctrine of “punarjanma” (re-incarnation) and firmly believe that “karma-phala” (the result of action) is inevitable ; hence, it is impossible fully to awaken the Indian people by holding out before them the

prospect of worldly and outward happiness. It is against the ingrained nature of the Indian people and changing this ingrained nature can never be really good for them also. If happiness can be attained without exerting themselves too much, the Indian people also can put forth some effort. Nevertheless, to engage in activities at all costs in the hope of attaining worldly happiness and prosperity alone is something for which the people of India are generally not much eager. Not only that; even if their longed for mundane results are attained, the Indian people do not, owing to their intrinsic nature, regard it as so valuable after all, and to regard it as such is not congenial for their natural temperament either. If, therefore an effort is begun sincerely and earnestly to develop their inherent propensity to the life of the Spirit (dharma) then and only then, through this, the real well-being, not only of the Indian people but also of the world as a whole will be achieved. I am speaking of the well-being of the entire world because it is the Indian people who are primarily and essentially the teachers of religion of the whole of mankind and their guru. Some modern western scholars too have started to prove in recent times that even Jesus Christ received his spiritual knowledge only after coming to India. Whether this is true or false is not necessary to discuss here ; for the fact that the light of elevated knowledge first radiated from India and inspired the rest of the Asian continent, and then Egypt and Europe is now being acknowledged by the learned ; the divinely clear-sighted ancient ṛṣis too have declared India to be the land where, and where alone the nature of liberation (mokṣa) was truly conceived and also achieved. If therefore, the Indian people emerges into prominence realizing their intrinsic and characteristic capacity, by that all classes of people all over the world will be (spiritually) benefited. But if one attempts to revive the Indian people by imitating alien ideas it will lead to the triumph of these alien concepts : it will not be regarded as the triumph of these alien concepts ; it will not be regarded as the triumph of the Indian people ; on the contrary it will then be the Indian people who, by

accepting these foreign ideas will acknowledge their own defeat. So, let the Indian people, by realizing their true vocation (capacity) direct their attention to the wisdom of their ancestors and by constantly keeping before their eyes the latter's ideals and methods of action, follow in their footsteps; this is my humble appeal to them. If they earnestly pursue "dharma-sādhana" (the course of their natural dharma) and become strong in their intrinsic force of character, political, social and all other kinds of progress will be easily accessible to them and in that case their progress will also be conducive to the general amelioration of all mankind.

The essence of the matter is that it is the divine (spiritual) force that constitutes the strength of the Indian people; it is "tapasyā" that constitutes their most powerful weapon (instrument) and it is the road indicated by the ṛṣis is their own path. This land of India is the natural abode of jīvas endowed with a god-like nature; it is through oblivion of their own god-like nature that the people of India have become plunged in the mire of misery and destitution. Remembering the power of tapas and the splendour of knowledge of their great ancestors let them, even now, take refuge in their pristine Deity - the Divine Lord of the three worlds (Īśvara). For one who has fallen in danger, Śrī Madhusūdana (Viṣṇu) is the sole Refuge; however, pestered by sins and sufferings the Indian people, if they take refuge in Śrī Bhagavān knowing Him to be the Remover of all troubles and afflictions and the Deity presiding over their own homes, with a simple heart, He will never be able to ignore the Nation that has all along been devoted to Him. Just as the Divine Lord (Viṣṇu), in order to rescue the celestial Elephant plunged in the morass, from the jaws of fierce sea creatures, descended down in a hurry, leaving even Garuḍa behind Him - having to rescue the humbly prostrate people of India from sins and tribulations, misery and destitution, He will no doubt descend in the same manner. Let me lend this book by quoting reassuring utterance issued from the Divine lips of the Blessed Lord :

api cet sudurācāro bhajate māmananyabhāk,
sādhureva sa mantavyaḥsamyagvyāvasito hi saḥ. (30)

kṣiprambhavati dharmātmā śaśvacchāntīm nigacchati,
kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati. (31)

mām hi pārtha vyāpāśritya ye'pi syuḥ pāpayonayaḥ,
striyo vaiśyāstathā śūdrāste'pi yānti parām gatim. (32)

kiṁ punarbrāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayastathā,
anityamasukhaṁ lokamimaṁ prāpya bhajasva mām. (33)

manmanā bhava madbhakto madyāji mām namaskuru
māmevaiśyasi yuktvaivamātmānam matparāyaṇaḥ. (34)

(Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā, Chapter- 9)

— If even a thoroughly wicked person worships Me with single-minded devotion, he too is regarded as a saint; for he has this firm conviction : “I shall certainly become blessed and fulfilled by the worship of the Divine”. (30)

— Such a person soon becomes a righteous soul and attains abiding peace; O, Kaunteya (Arjuna)! know for certain that my bhakta never perishes. (31)

— O Pārtha! Even women, vaiśyas, (the third caste — farmers and merchants), śūdras (the fourth caste whose primary business function is to serve the three upper classes) and those who are born as outcastes — if they take refuge in Me (surrender themselves to Me) certainly attain hereafter the supremely blessed state. (32)

— That the hallowed brāhmaṇas, full of sanctity, and the bhaktas among the sage-kings will attain this supreme state — does it need to be repeated therefore, having been born into this miserable and ephemeral world, engage in worship of, and meditation on Me. (33)

— With your mind wholly absorbed in Me and heart filled with bhakti, devote yourself to My “upāsanā” and offer salutation to Me (surrender yourself wholly to Me). Dedicating yourself thus to Me and fixing your mind on Me you will indeed attain Me. (34)

OM̐ TAT SAT

OM̐ HARIḤ

OM̐ ŚĀNTIḤ OM̐ ŚĀNTIḤ OM̐ ŚĀNTIḤ

PARAMATMA
PARABRAHMAN

- 1. Constantly Non-dual
- 2. Īśvara, Uttama Puruṣa

MAHĀMĀYĀ OR
MĀYĀSHAKTI

PURUṢA

(Drk-shakti)
Or Jīva-shakti or Brahma-
shakti

PRAKṚTI

The Power indwelling all objects of visual perception
(Pradhāna)
Prakṛti is constituted of the three guṇas: Sattva, Rajas and
Tamas; these guṇas, when remain in a state of equilibrium
without any action is called Prakṛti.

AHAM-TATTVA

The Puruṣa who dwells in this Mahat-
tattva is designated through names like
Kāryabrahma, Hiraṇyagarbha and so
on.

MAHAT-TATTVA (OR BUDDHI-TATTVA)

This is constituted of Sattva-guṇa; this kind of intelligence (buddhi)
is also called "niśeayātmika" (the buddhi which is firmly established
in the self); it is also known as the "manas"; when one becomes
firmly established in this tattva, he is described as "mahat"; however,
the sādḥaka, while remaining in this state does not identify himself
as the "buddhi"; he only perceives himself as separate from buddhi;
however, due to constant establishment in buddhi, the buddhi
constantly remains an object of visual perception; the sādḥaka
cannot, due to this reason, know his true self. The buddhi, during
this state, remains as the external body of the sādḥaka.

When the Puruṣa, due to connection with this Buddhi-
tattva perceives Himself as the self (sva), then the
emergence of Ahamtattva takes place. The feeling of
"I-ness" - 'ātma' - occurs in this state (of the Puruṣa);
it is this perception that truly describes the nature of
this state.

That part which
principally belongs
to the realm of
Sattva

That part which
principally belongs to the
realm of Rajas

That part which principally belongs
to the realm of Tamas

Manas

This Manas too
is considered as
an indriya
(sense organs).
In manas, the
tamas part
remains
completely
absent and rajas
faintly present.

Among the three senses, the sattva
has a stronger presence than the other
two in the following five
jñānendriyas (sense-organs of
knowledge or perception):
1) Śrotra (the sense organ of hearing)
2) Tyac (the tactual sense organ)
3) Cakṣus (the ocular sense organ)
4) Jihvā (the sense organ of taste)
5) Nāsikā (the sense organ of smell)

Among the three senses, the rajas has
a stronger presence among the three
senses, with tamas being slightly
manifest in the following five
karmendriyas (sense-organs of
actions):
1) Vāc (Speech)
2) Pāṇi (Hand)
3) Pāda (Foot)
4) Pāyu (The Anus)
5) Upastha (The generative organ)

Constituted by
Pañcatanmātras in
which, sattva is
almost unmanifest
and rajas has a faint
presence. They are:
1) Śabda (sound)
2) Sparśa (touch)
3) Rūpa (Form)
4) Rasa (Taste)
5) gandha (smell)

From these manifest the pañca-mahābhūtas: 1) Vyoma (the sky) 2) Marut (the air) 3) Tejas (The
fire) 4) Ap (The water) 5) Kṣiti (The earth)
The Sattva part remains unmanifest in these and the rajas, gradually becoming extremely feeble,
virtually disappears in the kṣiti-tattva

BRAHMAN

BRAHMAN

These eleven Indriyas together with Aham and Buddhi is called the 'trayodasa (thirteen) kāraṇas'.

These eleven tattvas starting from manas and ending in upastha
together called the ekādaśa Indriyas

BRAHMAN

BRAHMAN